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Praise then darkness and creation unfinished : myth and archetype in modern fiction.

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PRAISE THEN DARKNESS AND CREATION UNFINISHED:

Myth and Archetype in Modern Science Fiction

By

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ABSTRACT

For many people, the term "science fiction" is synonymous with Buck Rogers, monsters carrying off screaming women, and rocket ships to Mars. In its early years as a specialized genre, this conception often proved all too accurate. But not all science fiction was, or is, as weak as its worst examples indicate. As science changed man's conception of his universe in the nineteenth century, it also began, inexorably, to change man's view of himself. This changing focus is visible in the themes and patterns of the myths that are explored by writers, including science fiction writers, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many of the topics that appear regularly in science fiction works deal with the myths of modern society, from alienation through evolution through science creating utopia (or dystopia), making an archetypal approach to the genre appropriate.

In chapter I of this study, the historical background of the genre, leading to the publication of the first modern science fiction novel, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus (1818), is explored. Chapter II focusses on the important myths in Frankenstein. The third chapter discusses Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, and mentions the contributions of a number of major writers at the end of the last

century. Chapter IV develops the myths of Galactic Man and evolution, from the works of E.R. Burroughs and the pulp magazines in the nineteen twenties, through the novels of Olaf Stapledon in the thirties, to the writings of Gordon R. Dickson, Frank Herbert, and Arthur C. Clarke in the fifties, sixties, and seventies. The fifth chapter explores these myths, and others, in the works of a major contemporary science fiction writer, Ursula K. LeGuin, focussing on her "Hainish" stories. Chapter VI offers a brief summary of the discussion, indicating the value of science fiction as a part of the modern literary scene.

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I

Praise Then Darkness and Creation Unfinished:
Myth and Archetype in Modern Science Fiction

Through the ages, writers have been sensitive to the shifting patterns of human existence. A careful study of their responses to these patterns reveals the recurrence of basic ideas, or archetypes, that are common to all human cultures, and the use of culturally-based myths to express the archetypal themes. The literature of ancient Greece and Rome, the Eddas of Iceland, the sagas of old Britain all represent the classic myths of Earth's peoples. But there are other myths, specific to modern society, which are found chiefly in existential and absurdist literature, and in the branch of popular literature which in this century is called science fiction. Bernard Bergonzi speaks of the classic myths as "major" myths, while the modern ones are "minor." The difference is a temporal one:

> The major myths, one might say, give a generalized cultural form to certain abiding elements in the pattern of human existence. The minor myths, on the other hand, possess a wide relevance but nevertheless have a particular historical point of departure. 1.

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1. Bernard Bergonzi, The Early H.G. Wells, A Study of the Scientific Romances (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 19.

The modern myths are minor, then, only in the sense that the peculiar conditions which generated them did not exist in ancient times, but were the result of specific events in more recent history. The meaning, or theme, of a myth is its archetype. In classical mythology, the archetype is separate from its myth, so that it may be treated differently in various cultures. In every culture, however, a particular story has come to be associated with each archetype, such as the story of Noah representing the Judeo-Christian version of the flood archetype. But modern myths are not expressed in terms of any specific story. They are generally phrased in terms of their themes, such as the myth of alienation. In this sense, myth and archetype are the same, and the terms "theme" and "myth" may be used interchangeably.

It seems logical to place the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries as the historical point of origin for the modern myths. As a result of the dramatic growth of industrialization, beginning in Britain and spreading rapidly to the rest of the western world, radical changes in lifestyles and in social attitudes occurred in all levels of society. The standard of living rose, especially in the middle classes; wealth was distributed more equitably; advancements were being made in science and medicine that made existence more comfortable and that lengthened the human lifespan; and new developments in technology changed man's relationships with nature, and with himself. The old patterns of human existence, which has always changed slowly in the past, were swiftly overthrown. New themes grew up to replace the traditional patterns, new ways of looking at the world; and these themes

formed the basis of the myths of modern humanity.

In a world where change had suddenly become commonplace, the myths of alienation and anxiety were quick to develop. There was a strong sense that humanity had been cut off from God and nature by machines, so that it was no longer possible to have genuine, personal involvements between individuals. There were no longer any roots, binding the human race to its past, or to the earth. Nothing in the modern world seemed permanent, except the condition of change. Without roots, and without a sense of belonging to a unified humanity, the prevailing social mood was anxiety.

And yet, despite the fears and the sense of isolation felt by many people in the industrial world, the myth of progress, especially through science, took on a great deal of importance in the 19th century. With the old, established values toppling by the wayside, people needed some other myths to set up in their place. If the universe did not operate according to divine law, then at least there were scientific laws which could be depended on to remain constant. Science's tool, technology, had found ways to ease the burden of labour, and to make comfort affordable to more and more people. Men and women lived longer, and were healthier than ever before. A spirit troubled by changed could be mollified by the belief that science was making the world a better, more nearly perfect place.

In literature, the Romantic movement grew out of the deep changes in the world, as both a reaction against aspects of industrialization and a product of it. In his book, Passages About Earth, William Irwin Thompson

declares that

> if you went around in England in the 1790's asking how it felt to be living in an age of industrial revolution, most people would not know what you were talking about. But if you went to see "the lunatic" William Blake, he would tell you about the meaning of the great transformation by moving back and forth from one end of history to the other in a notation especially designed for ideas that large -- mythology....
>
> Events that are too large to be perceived in immediate history register in the unconscious in the collective form of myth, and since artists and visionaries possess strongly mythopoeic imaginations, they can express in the microcosm of their works what is going on in the macrocosm of mankind. 2.

The standard pattern for the Romantic hero can be found in the poetry of Lord Byron. This hero is usually dark, brooding, introspective, and solitary. He searches for meaning in his life, and seldom finds it, except in the peace of nature. While the search, or quest, is a classical theme, the Byronic hero, with his painful sense of apartness, is distinctly modern. The use of natural, wild settings in Romantic literature is an attempt to maintain humanity's links with the past, and with nature itself, and suggests that the writers are indeed aware of the passing of the old world order, and the rising of a new type of society.

Along with the alienated outsider-hero, revolution and change are favourite subjects in the literature of the period. Works ranging from Blake's "The Chimney Sweeper" (1789) to Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man

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2. William Irwin Thompson, Passages About Earth, An Exploration of the New Planetary Culture, A Lindisfarne Book (New York: Perennial Library, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), pp. 122-123.

(1791) to Shelley's "The Mask of Anarchy" (1832) [3] reflect the social and political upheaval of an era which had seen more rapid growth, and more dramatic changes, than any preceding age of human history. In the heart of this Romantic movement, in the midst of the newly industrialized world, Mary Shelley published her first novel, Frankenstein: Or, The Modern Prometheus, in 1818, and gave birth to a modern literary form. With its use of science as an integral part of the plot, and its explorations of the consequences of scientific curiosity, Frankenstein is the first true science fiction story ever published.

C. Hugh Holman defines science fiction as

> a form of fantasy in which scientific facts, assumptions, or hypothoses form the basis, by logical extrapolation, of adventures in the future, on other planets, in other dimensions in time, or under new variants of scientific law. [4].

To this basic definition, a few points should be added for the sake of clarity. In order to qualify as science fiction, a story can not simply substitute a rocket ship for a horse or an automobile. The use of science or its devices must inform the entire work, and not serve merely as an exotic setting or prop. Also, the science of a given work need not be one of the physical, or "hard," sciences. Many works in the genre

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3. The dates given for these three works indicate the date of publication. Shelley's poem was actually written in 1819 and sent to Leigh Hunt, then editor of the Examiner; but Hunt withheld it because he "thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse." Quoted in English Romantic Poetry and Prose, ed. Russell Noyes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 1052.

4. C. Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature, 3rd ed. (Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1972), p. 481.

today deal with the "soft" sciences of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, as well as the more familiar physics, astronomy, and chemistry of Verne and Asimov. With the emphasis of the genre on science and its effects on human society, science fiction is a truly modern literary form. The themes and patterns of its tales are those of the modern myths: alienation, anxiety, scientific progress (in both utopian and dystopian forms), and evolution, among the major ideas.

There have been attempts to give the title of "first science fiction ever written" to a wide variety of works, reaching all the way back to the myths of Prometheus, and Icarus and Daedalus. Brian W. Aldiss devotes a chapter of his Billion Year Spree, The True History of Science Fiction to the writers who helped to set the stage for the ultimate arrival of science fiction in the early 19th century. Beginning with Lucian of Samosata in the 2nd century AD, he traces an interesting background of fables, fantasies, and utopias that bear some resemblance to what later became science fiction. One finds numerous trips to the moon, by an odd assortment of means that includes evaporating dewdrops (tied to Cyrano de Bergerac), waterspouts (in Lucian's True History), and magic (in Kepler's daemon, astronomy). The satires of writers such as Swift and Samuel Butler make use of exotic settings in order to stress their social comments. Even DeFoe's Robinson Crusoe explores a science fictional theme of man in isolation, although it is not of course a science fiction novel. Aldiss discusses the contributions of Voltaire, Shakespeare, Bulwer-Lytton, Plato, Aristophanes, Thomas More, and several others, but always keeps in mind that none of these artists

are science fiction writers per se, although all are, in a sense, "Pilgrim Fathers" of the genre. [5]

Arthur Clarke has suggested Johannes Kepler's Somnium, Sive Astronomia Lunaris (1609) [6] as a possible candidate for the position of first science fiction work, but like the writings mentioned above, Kepler's Somnium is not science fictional in its focus. A brief look at this work may be helpful in showing why it could have been suggested as a science fiction story, and why it is ultimately not one. Somnium deals with a visit to the moon by an observer, apparently Kepler himself, who describes what he finds there in scientific terms. As a respected mathematician, Kepler offers the readers astute, scientifically accurate observations of the lunar surface, giving the work the properly realistic setting that is normally found in science fiction. But the details of the plot that Kepler uses show that he is not especially interested in his story. Kepler uses a supernatural element, in the form of a daemon (whimsically named "astronomy" in a footnote to the Somnium), [7] to get to the moon. This traditional device permits him to focus on his

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5. For the full discussion of the significance of the precursors of the genre, see Chapter 3, "Pilgrim Fathers: Lucian and All That," Brian W. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, The True History of Science Fiction (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 57-80.

6. Arthur C. Clarke, Man & Space, Life Science Library (New York: Time Incorporated, 1964), p. 23.

7. Johannes Kepler, in Kepler's Dream, John Lear, trans. Patricia Frueh Kirkwood (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 108, n. 72.

observations, without spending time on the "story" aspects of the work. The allegorical framework of the Somnium is meant as a disguise for the radical scientific theory it contains. Kepler lived at a time when any theory that disagreed with or contradicted biblical teaching was suppressed. One need only remember the trials of Galileo, a contemporary of Kepler's, to understand the possible danger of bold, revolutionary declarations in the realm of science. Kepler had already had some trouble with censorship of earlier works.[8] By calling his work a "Dream," he hoped to avoid further censorship; but what the Somnium is, in reality, is a scientific document, presenting new astronomical observations in a way the author hoped would be acceptable to the Churches and understandable by other scientists. Thus, Somnium loses its claim to the name of "first science fiction story."

But while Somnium turns out, on examination, to be not a work of fiction at all, there is no doubt that Frankenstein is indeed a book that synthesizes art and science. While Kepler attempted only to present scientific theory, with a thin veneer of "story" laid over it superficially, Mary Shelley has drawn on a variety of influences in her life and world, including the experiments on electricity pioneered by Galvani, the popular literary form of the Gothic novel, and the theories, both scientific and artistic, of Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles) and her husband, Percy Shelley. The result is, truly, the birth of a monster.

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8. Lear gives a number of examples in Kepler's Dream. See pp. 6 and 11 for two of these.

II

Mary Shelley's first novel makes use of a number of modern myths, including science, alienation, human progress, the splintered self, and a modern variation on the classical quest. The inter-relatedness of these themes in the work forms a complex pattern, which is reflected in Shelley's title, Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus. In her use of the Prometheus image, she has combined the past and the present, and has indicated the dual elements of myth and science in the novel.

The classical version of the Prometheus myth contains a number of incidents and implications that appear in altered form in this work, and an examination of these aspects of the myth can reveal much about both Victor Frankenstein and his monstrous creation. Prometheus is most widely known as the Titan who stole fire from the gods for humanity. As punishment for this crime, he suffered eternal torment by being chained to a mountain, while his liver was ripped daily by a vulture. The image of Prometheus as the discoverer of fire appears in connection with the daemon in two important incidents. The first of these occurs when the monster stumbles upon a fire left by beggars in the wood, where he is wandering. He quickly learns its properties, and sets about to use the fire for his own needs:

> "... [I] was overcome with delight at the warmth I experienced from it. In my joy I thrust my hand into the live embers, but quickly drew it out again with a cry of pain. How strange, I thought, that the same cause should produce such opposite effects! I examined the materials of the fire, and to my joy found it to be composed of wood. I quickly collected some branches; but they were wet, and would not burn.... The wet wood which I had placed near the heat dried, and itself became inflamed. I reflected on this; and, by touching the various branches, I discovered the cause....
>
> "... a gentle breeze quickly fanned it [the fire] into a flame. I observed this also, and contrived a fan of branches, which roused the embers when they were nearly extinguished. When night came again, I found, with pleasure, that the fire gave light as well as heat; and that the discovery of this element was useful to me in my food...." 9.

The creature learns many important things about fire and its uses in this first contact with it. But he has not yet learned how to reproduce fire, once it is gone. Like Prometheus, he has simply discovered and made use of a fire that was already burning, that was left by the race of his creator.

In the second use of fire by the creature, the image of Prometheus making a gift of fire to man is reversed. Having been rejected by the De Lacey family, who have seen only a monster when he seeks their friendship, Frankenstein's daemon feels the need for revenge against them. He returns to their now-empty cottage, from which the family has fled, and destroys it:

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9. Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus, Everyman's Library ed. (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1963), pp. 106-107.

> "... when I reflected that they had spurned and deserted me, anger returned, a rage of anger; and unable to injure anything human, I turned my fury towards inanimate objects. As night advanced, I placed a variety of combustibles around the cottage; and, having destroyed every vestige of cultivation in the garden, I waited with forced impatience until the moon had sunk to commence my operations." 10.

In true mythic fashion, nature cooperates with the monster's desires, inciting him to a frenzy of destruction:

> "As the night advanced, a fierce wind arose from the woods, and quickly dispersed the clouds that had loitered in the heavens: the blast tore along like a mighty avalanche, and produced a kind of insanity in my spirits that burst all bounds of reason and reflection. I lighted the dry branch of a tree, and danced with fury around the devoted cottage, my eyes still fixed on the western horizon, the edge of which the moon nearly touched. A part of its orb was at length hid, and I waved my brand; it sunk, and, with a loud scream, I fired the straw, and heath, and bushes, which I had collected. The wind fanned the fire, and the cottage was quickly enveloped by the flames, which clung to it, and licked it with their forked and destroying tongues." 11.

In the original Greek telling of the myth, Prometheus gives fire to men in a gesture of friendship, so that men may be warm and cook their food. But here, the monster as Prometheus brings destruction and rage against humanity through his use of fire. Significantly, this act of violence occurs, according to the monster, in late autumn, mythically

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10. Shelley, Frankenstein, p. 146.

11. Shelley, Frankenstein, p. 146.

the season of decay, tragedy, and approaching death.

Prometheus is not known only as the bringer of fire, however. In many ancient myths, he is called the creator of mankind. According to the legend, Prometheus mixed clay with water, and fashioned the mixture into a man; the goddess Athene breathed life into the nostrils of the figure. Just as the aspect of Prometheus as fire-bringer can be seen in the character of the monster, so is it possible to compare Victor Frankenstein with Prometheus, the creator of man. But again, the original mythic pattern is inverted in the novel. Just as the creature "discovers" fire without, in the beginning, understanding its potentials, so Victor Frankenstein "discovers" the secret of creating life without appreciating the consequences of his action until it is too late.

Each of these characters, then, represents only one facet of the myth of Prometheus. Frankenstein represents the creator, and his creature represents the deceiver, the stealer of divine fire. Each character discovers, in the course of the novel, that he must seek out the other, for the creator and his creation are two facets of the same human personality. By dividing the application of the Prometheus image between the two figures, Mary Shelley has taken the classical myth and transformed it into a symbol of the various interdependent minor myths that form the substance of the work.

Before he has successfully animated his creation, Victor Frankenstein is a firm believer in the myth of science. He is also a member of human society, with all the privileges of companionship, love, and wealth that such a membership implies. But Shelley suggests that Frankenstein is flawed by his obsession with science, and especially with the possibility of creating life, even at this stage in his life. It is his excessive belief in the myth of science that leads him to his ultimate destruction.

In some ways, Frankenstein at this period resembles the young poet Shelley, Mary's husband. Like Shelley, Frankenstein is fascinated, at first by alchemy and magic, and then by science. He recalls:

> The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. Curiosity, earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature, gladness akin to rapture, as they were unfolded to me, are among the earliest sensations I can remember. 12.

Mary Shelley's chapters on the development of Frankenstein's obsession suggest that his transition from alchemy to science is based on a strong sense of wonder. Certainly, Mary had a model for such a development in her husband, Percy. Carl Grabo describes the young poet's interest in science:

> Shelley was highly imaginative, even credulous. The transition of his interest from the occult to the scientific is by way of this love for the marvelous, for the new sciences of chemistry and electricity promised greater marvels than alchemy,

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12. Shelley, Frankenstein, p. 27.

> marvels much more authentic, more possible of immediate realization. 13.

That this decision to study science because of a love for the marvelous is a genuine human impulse is further borne out by the testimony of the modern astronomer/exobiologist, Carl Sagan, who claims to have made his commitment to science as a result of a boyhood fondness for E.R. Burroughs's Mars adventures. [14] The myth of science is indeed a compelling one to the intelligent modern mind.

But Victor is not simply a believer in the myth; he is its slave. Unlike the poet Shelley, Victor loses his interest in the world of beauty around him. His interest in the affairs of his fellow men fades away. He becomes a virtual recluse, self-alienated from his society. Because of his obsession with creating life in his laboratory, the young Frankenstein is now in the throes of two of the modern myths: science, and alienation. The feelings often associated with alienation in literature are ascribed to Frankenstein:

> ... my enthusiasm was checked by my anxiety, and I appeared rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in the mines, or any other unwholesome trade, than an artist occupied by his favourite employment. Every night I was oppressed by a slow fever, and I became nervous to a most painful degree; the fall of a leaf startled me, and I shunned my fellow-creatures as if I had been guilty of a crime. Sometimes I grew alarmed at the wreck I perceived that I had become.... 15.

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13. Carl Grabo, A Newton Among Poets: Shelley's Use of Science in Prometheus Unbound (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 5.

14. Dr. Sagan mentions this influence in Chapter 9 of his book, The Cosmic Connection (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1973).

15. Shelley, Frankenstein, p. 50.

If Frankenstein is alienated, a victim of his obsession with science, it is only natural that his creature is also alienated. The monster is the spawn of an unnatural desire; it has no place in the society of men. "The first readers of Frankenstein," writes Christopher Small,

> felt that they were being got at in a way both frightening and unfair, since the story was almost by definition "unnatural", but at the same time it was exactly the point of the story, showing the results of going beyond or parodying nature, that held their attention. 16.

The readers were, in fact, responding to the uncomfortable myths of their brave new world. Victor Frankenstein began with the myth of science, as did the people of the early 19th century. He pursued his myth too far, allowing no limits to his curiosity, his imagination, or his ambitions. As Prometheus was punished for presuming to take on the rights and role of a god by stealing the divine fire, so the young student is punished for presumptuously attempting to create a new, superior race of human beings. Prometheus was taken from the society of men and gods alike, isolated on a mountain and tortured by a bird of prey; but Victor Frankenstein's punishment is even more horrible, for it is self-imposed. His obsession has alienated him, and his apparent success has resulted in the separation of his personality's two aspects. In Victor remains the emotional side of man,

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16. Christopher Small, Ariel Like a Harpy: Shelley, Mary and Frankenstein (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1972), p. 19.

which is only fitting since it has been his lack of intellectual responsibility which allowed him to create the monster without considering the consequences. To the creature goes the power of intellect, as illustrated throughout the novel by the monster's ability to learn quickly. Frankenstein's careless, overpowering faith in the goodness of science, coupled with his ambition to be revered as the creator of a new race, have splintered his soul. He is, as Muriel Spark points out, a "disintegrated being."[17] His conscience serves as the tormenting vulture, always ripping at his happiness and peace of mind.

> After the creation of the Monster, since Frankenstein loses to him an integral portion of his being, his character is a study, and a well-executed one, in the mounting obsession of a lost soul to find itself.
>
> But the Monster's development is a larger proposition than Frankenstein's. He does not, like Frankenstein, inherit a civilized way of thought -- he inherits nothing but life itself, and the whole gamut of mankind's journey from savage to modern times is played throughout the years of his life. 18.

In the growth and development of the creature's personality, Shelley has explored yet another modern myth: the myth of human progress. Her position on humanity is basically that of her husband, Percy, and the other Romantic writers and artists. It is natural for humans to be good; but society corrupts and distorts that innate goodness. The monster is a superman. He is larger, more powerful, and faster than the humans around him; and he is also highly intelligent, possibly possessing a super intelligence. Ostensibly, he should be superior in every respect,

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17. Muriel Spark, Child of Light: A Reassessment of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (Hadleigh, Essex: Tower Bridge Publications Limited, 1951), p. 137.

18. Spark, Child of Light, p. 147.

including morally. But he is not. He is ugly, and men shun him. He is a product of his civilization, and men teach him hatred, fear, and pain. He lacks any real emotions, as Muriel Spark states:

> what passes for emotion -- his need for companionship, his feelings of revenge towards Frankenstein -- are really intellectual passions arrived at through rational channels. He is asexual, and demands his bride as a companion, never as a lover or even merely a mate; since his emotions reside in the heart of Frankenstein, as does Frankenstein's intellect in him. 19.

Having no emotions, the monster becomes a remoreseless killer, tutored by the cruelty of human society. In this Romantic version of the myth of human evolution, the movement is from animalistic innocence through childlike wonder and learning to disillusionment and corruption at the hands of society.

Thus, Shelley has shown the modern myths of the divided self and alienation, and has explored the problems inherent in the myths of science and progress. These themes are united with the final meeting of the monster and his dead creator on the ice, so that the archetypal quest or journey becomes the central image of motion in the work. Muriel Spark indicates that "the Prometheus myth is one of action but not of movement; that is, the main activity of the original story is located around the tortured Prometheus himself, chained to one spot." [20] While the myth of Prometheus embodies the themes of the novel, it is the myth of pursuit that fulfills

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19. Spark, Child of Light, p. 149.

20. Spark, Child of Light, p. 135.

these ideas.

Because Frankenstein and his creature are merely two halves of the same personality, it is only natural that the two characters should alternate between the roles of pursuer and pursued. In the beginning, it is the monster who pursues Frankenstein, The daemon's earliest motive is simply curiosity; remembering little of his origins, he feels that his maker must surely be a wondrous being. But as he is shunned by men, he becomes increasingly resentful of the man who made him so ugly, and his motivation quickly becomes revenge against a cruel "god," represented by his creator, Frankenstein. When Frankenstein thwarts him in his plan to have a monster-bride, with whom to live in the wilds, the monster and the creator begin to shift their roles. Frankenstein's change of heart, and his destruction of the nearly-completed female daemon, doom the monster to a life of eternal loneliness and isolation from any sort of society, just as Prometheus was doomed to be chained to a lonely mountain peak, away from men. The creature sets out to impose a similar loneliness on Frankenstein, by killing all those people who are important to the young student. The murder of Elizabeth, Frankenstein's bride, on their wedding night, completes the change in roles. Now it is Frankenstein who is the pursuer, bent on destroying what he made.

The climax of the pursuit occurs in an archetypal tragic setting of ice and winter with the death of Victor. The monster's wild grief over the body in Walton's ship represents the final reunion of the splintered personality of Frankenstein, as the intellectual half, the monster, takes

on the emotions which had remained in his creator. Frankenstein has been released from the doom of his life, and the monster vows to follow him to the peace of death, where he "shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume [him], or be the prey of feelings unsatisfied, yet unquenched." [21]

The ultimate tone of the book, overriding even its obvious horror, is doubt. True to its post-Industrial Revolutionary period, Frankenstein questions almost everything about life, science, progress, society, and human nature, and draws no clear-cut conclusions. Frankenstein is an artist of sorts, rebelling against death. He believes in the new myths of progress and science, as in fact did Mary and Percy Shelley and most of their intellectual friends, to some extent. Carl Grabo has indicated the extent of Percy Shelley's knowledge of and interest in science in his work, A Newton Among Poets, and most critics have pointed out that Mary shared her husband's interest. But while progress is believed in, an additional myth, that society is a corrupting influence, tends to balance it; man is basically noble, but society won't let him stay that way. And, although the myth of science suggests that all things will be improved through science, there is a corresponding fear of science out of control. If curiosity is a virtue, so must restraint be. Curiosity without care for its possible consequences is dangerous. No idea, no mythic theme can be seen as wholly good, or wholly evil. If Frankenstein has created a monster, it is not because he is an evil man; he has been foolish and irresponsible, but his intentions were noble. And if he

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21. Shelley, Frankenstein, p. 241.

has unwittingly unleashed a horror on the world, he has suffered because of his folly. If the monster has murdered, it is not because he is wholly evil; he has been greatly wronged by men, and in the end comes to suffer greatly with remorse over his actions. Doubt assaults Frankenstein directly, rendering him unable to act against the thing he has made until it has killed, and killed again. Muriel Spark compares him at this stage in his development to Hamlet;[22] but perhaps a closer analogy would be with the mouse of Dostoyevsky's Notes from Underground who is filled with resentment, but unable to act. At any rate, the prevailing mood of doubt has distinctly existential overtones, and is at least in part caused by the disintegration of Frankenstein's personality, which in its turn is caused by Frankenstein's irresponsible, uncontrolled curiosity.

Ultimately, the entire work returns to its scientific story, and its themes exploring the consequences of scientific curiosity. There can be no separation of the science from the story in Frankenstein, for the science is the story. The mood is doubt, a questioning of the world in flux. The motivation is curiosity, "what would happen if...?" In its tone, its content, and its attitudes, Frankenstein is, indeed, the first true story of the modern genre of science fiction.

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22. Spark, Child of Light, p. 137.

III

In the decades that followed the publication of Frankenstein, many other writers were to pick up on the themes that Mary Shelley used. Not all of these writers chose to adopt her basically Romantic and revolutionary new genre, preferring different approaches to the effects of industrial growth on their world. But there were others, who felt a need to express their views on science and technology in fiction that looked at the causes of alienation and anxiety, as well as the results. Utopian novels were especially popular in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as were their less serious counterparts, the tales of lost worlds and lost races. The theme of evolution began to take on major significance in literature, both fiction and non-fiction. Progress and science were hailed as the saviours of humanity, and condemned as its destroyers. And all of these themes, and many other modern myths, were to appear in works that followed Frankenstein's blueprint, combining art and science with care and purpose.

Thomas D. Clareson points out that science fiction came into its own as a literary genre at more or less the same time as realism became a primary force in literature, in the period between 1870 and 1910. During this time, there were at least as many authors experimenting with the "new fantasy", as he calls it, as with realism. The

important distinction between the two modes of expression lies in the aspect of the mechanized universe on which each mode focussed. The realists chose to deal with the threat of nihilism, with the results inherent in such a universe. Science fiction examined the scientific and technical developments themselves, the visual reality which complements the emotional and psychic reality of the realist/naturalist writers. In Professor Clareson's words, science fiction became at this time "the other side of realism, the companion response to the new age of science." [23] Some writers of science fiction focus only on the wonders of science, pursuing the myths of progress and science as their major patterns of expression. Others, following more closely in the footsteps of Shelley's Frankenstein, used these myths as ways of developing other myths, and of expressing inner truths in the manner of the realists. The first group of sf writers can be typified in this time period by the French author, Jules Verne. The second group is exemplified by H.G. Wells.

Jules Verne is generally considered to be the ultimate scientific realist. He is concerned with gadgets and technology, and his stories are filled with marvelous inventions, many of which have proved to be remarkably accurate models for later inventions, such as submarines. He is clearly a believer in the myth of progress through science. His basic assumption is that the world will be saved by science, and that man is automatically

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23. Thomas D. Clareson, "The Other Side of Realism," in SF: The Other Side of Realism, Essays on Modern Fantasy and Science Fiction, ed. Thomas D. Clareson (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Press, 1971), p. 9.

improved along with his environment. The author devotes his attention to sharing with his readers his own sense of wonder and delight, so that his stories gain great public appeal. The works are generally tales of high adventure. Verne's heroes explore the inner depths of the globe, the surface of the moon, and the marvels of the sea. Yet, while the escape element is strong in his work, Verne never wholly leaves the real world. His scientific detail holds him to the earth, while allowing him to suggest the possibilities in an expanding universe to his audience.

Robert Philmus states that Verne's viewpoint takes the form of a private myth,

> embodying his own beliefs, rather than displacing, and thus commenting upon, the historical condition of man. This is not to say that Verne disregards history; but usually historical actualities, instead of generating Verne's myths, are subsumed as part of his private ahistorical vision. 24.

The intensely personal view of Verne is called an inverted myth by Philmus and Roland Barthes; rather than the myth of man seeking transcendance and unity with nature, Verne's myth "is an introverted vision of man seeking self-enclosure." [25] The factual details that are used in the stories add to the personal element of the myth because they are parts of the author's "real world," and have meaning to him. Because

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24. Robert M. Philmus, Into the Unknown: The Evolution of Science Fiction from Francis Godwin to H.G. Wells (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 33.

25. Philmus, Into the Unknown, p. 34.

of the private and self-contained nature of Verne's myth, few of the modern myths with any general application are used significantly in his fiction. His settings were always in his world, rather than in humanity's. As Donald Wollheim points out,

> his scenes and his characterizations never changed -- they were always reflected against the unvarying political scenery of the latter half of the nineteenth century. There is no evidence of social change in his works -- his inventions do not change their inventors nor their users. Sometimes one like Captain Nemo or Robur may dedicate himself to righting wrongs, but the motivation even then is usually revenge or personal vindication rather than any soaring desire to move the human condition forward. 26.

The personal, private myth of Jules Verne is in marked contrast with the more general, public-oriented myths of H.G. Wells. While elements of the Wellsian story can be seen as private, such as the recurrent pattern of escape from confinement in The Time Machine, When the Sleeper Wakes, The Island of Dr. Moreau, and other works, the application of these elements is never restricted only to the author, but can be seen in terms of humanity in general as well. "One never loses the awareness," states Robert Philmus,

> that the fantastic state of affairs in Wells's science fiction relates outward to the public world, that it displaces and reflects upon the realities and possibilities of man in society; whereas in most of Verne's fantasies, the private myth is central and moves, as it were, inward on itself. 27.

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26. Donald A. Wollheim, The Universe Makers: Science Fiction Today (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 19.

27. Philmus, Into the Unknown, p. 34.

Wells's concern is social, rather than personal. The myths he uses are accordingly the myths of society in general.

H.G. Wells's first novel, The Time Machine, was serialized in "The New Review", a popular periodical, in the January through May, 1895, issues, at a time when Jules Verne was the top science fiction writer in the world. Its immediate popularity testifies to the power of the myths the tale embodies, and Wells was hailed as a brilliant new star on the literary horizon. Sam Moskowitz points out:

> The views of many critics on Wells reflected those of novelist Ford Madox Ford in 1898: "I do not have to assure you that it did not take us long to recognize that here was Genius. Authentic, real Genius. And delightful at that." 28.

Bernard Bergonzi speaks of the preoccupation with the future as being typical of the fin de siècle mentality, and he suggests that Wells's story of a man displaced in time is a "minor", or modern, myth. [29] At any rate, it is certainly a preoccupation with H.G. Wells, for most of his writing reflects an intense interest in the future, and this tale of explorers in time was rewritten several times, along with some articles dealing with the scientific aspects of time travel theories. Ingvald Raknem suggests that The Time Machine was the fifth or sixth

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28. Sam Moskowitz, "Introduction, A History of Science Fiction in the Popular Magazines, 1891-1911", in Science Fiction by Gaslight, A History and Anthology of Science Fiction in the Popular Magazines, 1891-1911 (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1968), p. 25.

29. Bergonzi, The Early H.G. Wells, p. 35.

version of the story. [30]

The setting of the final version, The Time Machine, is a typical drawing room in a middle-class home owned by the Time Traveller, himself a typical middle-class man of the 19th century. He is surrounded by his friends, who are equally typical. Wells is careful to give these men no clear names, except to toss in "Dash," or "Filby," or similar non-names. They are types, recognizable stereotypes of men at the end of the 19th century, and it is as types that they are generally referred to. They are the Medical Man, the Editor, and the Very Young Man. By using types, Wells allows the reader to delve into the story itself, without the need for elaborate character description of these listeners. They are immediately recognizable to the reader, from whose world they are drawn; and the reader, by so easily recognizing them, is able to become one of the listeners himself.

> The opening chapters of the novel show us the inventor entertaining his friends, a group of professional men, in the solid comfort of his home at Richmond. They clearly derive from the 'club-man' atmosphere with which several of Kipling's short stories open, and their function in the narrative is to give it a basis in contemporary life at its most ordinary and pedestrian.... [31]

> Once the reader has been initiated into the group of friends, he is prepared for whatever is to come next. [32]

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30. Ingvald Raknem, H.G. Wells and His Critics (Oslo: Universitets-forlaget, 1962), p. 393. The original version of the novel was a short story that Wells never completed, called "The Chronic Argonauts." What exists of the story is included in Bergonzi's book, The Early H.G. Wells, along with another early work, "A Tale of the Twentieth Century, for Advanced Thinkers." Both stories reflect the immaturity of Wells as an author in the 1890's.

31. Bergonzi, The Early H.G. Wells, p. 43.

32. Bergonzi, The Early H.G. Wells, p. 44.

The lack of character description and development, especially in the early part of the book, is a flaw in Wells's style that can be found in all his early romances. It is a serendipitous flaw, however, since it allows the reader to examine the story itself, without becoming too involved with characters. Wells's ideas remain the most important feature of his science fiction stories.

The Time Machine yields up a wide variety of myths to the studious reader. A suggestion of the scientific quest after knowledge motivates the Time Traveller in the beginning. It is his curiosity, aroused by theories on the fourth dimension, time, that first lead him to think of the possibilities of travel through time. Man, he asserts, has the intelligence to travel in the three physical dimensions of space:

> He can go up against gravitation in a balloon, and why should he not hope that ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time-Dimension, or even turn about and travel the other way? 33.

The concept of time travel is logically impossible; paradox and accidents in time travelling argue against it. But since time travel is used as a device in the story, and not as the story itself, the lack of scientific plausibility does not matter. Travel through time is a mythic symbol of the quest of the hero for truth, or knowledge.

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33. H.G. Wells, The Time Machine (New York: Pyramid Books, 1966), p. 10.

In The Time Traveller's adventures among the Eloi and Morlocks in the year 802,701, Wells introduces a number of other patterns that can be viewed as modern myths. There is a Wellsian comment on Darwin's theory of evolution in the movement of the work from the nineteenth century to the year 802,701, and ultimately beyond the time of humanity to the silent end of the world. This evolutionary movement is represented in various other themes: the economic class-struggle of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reflected in the division of mankind into Eloi and Morlock; the struggle of technology against nature, shown in the horror of the underground world of the Morlocks and the Eden-like garden of the Eloi; and the archetypal battles of light and darkness, good and evil, innocence and experience that have attended the evolution of humanity through the millenia. And finally, the Time Traveller himself, as an enlightened hero, returns to inform his friends of the success of his quest, only to leave again, like Odysseus, bringing yet another mythic piece into the pattern of The Time Machine.

Evolution, like the future, is an important topic in the literature of the eighteen-nineties to the nineteen-twenties, partly because of the continuing controversy over Charles Darwin's theory. In The Time Machine, as in The Island of Dr. Moreau in 1896, Wells explores a few alternatives to Darwin's ideas. The reversion in Moreau from man to beast and the "devolution" in The Time Machine from man into, first, Morlock (described as ape-like in the novel) and child-like Eloi, and ultimately, "a thing like a huge white butterfly" and "a monstrous crab-

like creature" in the remote future, suggests that Wells did not want his readers to simply accept the general belief that evolution was somehow designed to improve humanity's lot. Philmus quotes Wells's essay, "Zoological Retrogression," on the subject:

> "...so far as any scientist can tell us, it may be that ... Nature is, in unsuspected obscurity, equipping some now humble creature with wider possibilities of appetite, endurance, or destruction, to rise in the fulness of time and sweep homo away into the darkness from which his universe arose. The Coming Beast must certainly be reckoned in any anticipatory calculations regarding the Coming Man." 34.

This idea also plays a role in other stories by Wells, most notably The War of the Worlds (1898).

Most critics draw attention to the apparently Marxist idea of humanity evolving into two diminished races in The Time Machine. But Wells was careful to avoid turning the story into a simple Marxist allegory, by refusing to allow either the Eloi or the Morlocks to remain fully human. His socialist attitudes allowed the idea of a "master class" to be shown as ultimately self-defeating, in the picture of the child-like, beautiful, useless Eloi; but he did not simply show the superiority of the workers. The Morlocks are indeed now the masters, but they are monstrous, and seem less human even than the degenerate Eloi. Aldiss (and others) have called the Morlocks the "submerged

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34. H.G. Wells, "Zoological Retrogression," The Gentleman's Magazine (Sept. 7, 1891), p. 253; quoted in Philmus, Into the Unknown, p. 72.

nation," and see the split humanity as an artistic rendering of Disraeli's Two Nations. [35] Wells himself, through the Time Traveller, agrees ironically, while suggesting that man no longer exists in his descendants. The Morlocks are beasts of prey, and the Eloi are fatted cattle; but are they men?

A persistent modern myth is that of the machine against nature. In The Time Machine, Wells shows the physical changes that occur along with the social ones in this battle. The social changes, of course, appear in the divided humanity. The Eloi, the aristocrats, are shown as belonging to nature in this struggle. They live in the garden-like atmosphere of the upper world. Their lives are at first described in idyllic terms, as they laugh, play, and eat of the fruits of the garden freely, with no need to work or struggle for anything. Representing the technology of the machine are the workers, the Morlocks. They live in the bowels of the earth (the submerged nation), and they toil to keep the lives of the Eloi carefree. But the apparent masters, the gentle Eloi, have become mastered by the Morlocks. Fear, as the Time Traveller states, has come back into the world. The appearances of the world of 802,701 are deceiving. Nature has not won the ultimate battle. And, with the passing of time, the garden will pass away with humanity, leaving the world a stark and awesome place. Chapter 11 of the novel describes the end in striking images that chill the reader's imagination.

Of the battle of light versus dark, little need be said. The Eloi

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35. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, p. 116.

are representative of the upper world, and of light. The Morlocks, dwellers in the dark, cannot live in the light. The Time Traveller aligns himself with the Eloi, and uses fire/light in his struggles against the Morlocks. He amuses the Eloi with matches; matches are used to drive the mole-like Morlocks back into the darkness in his first venture into their tunnels. He sets a fire in the forest to drive the creatures away when he and Weena, the Eloi girl, are forced to travel at night. But Wells adds an element to the myth; he shows that light, associated with good, can also destroy. For the fire the Time Traveller lights spreads, destroying a part of the garden-like world of the Eloi. The fire, a symbol of defense against the Morlocks/forces of evil, also becomes a symbol of the coming destruction of the Eloi by the Morlocks. And in his final escape from the year 802,701, the Time Traveller discovers that his matches will not burn, and that he can no longer frighten the Morlocks away from him.

After this last struggle with the Morlocks, the Time Traveller moves on to the end of the earth. He discovers that there is nothing left of humanity at all, and only monstrous crabs and an unspecified flapping creature are left to inherit the earth. He has seen mankind's destiny. His quest is ended. So, he decides to return to his own time to tell his story. He does not expect belief from his audience.

> 'To tell the truth ... I hardly believe it myself .... And yet ...'
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> His eyes fell with a mute inquiry upon the withered white flowers upon the table. 36.

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36. Wells, The Time Machine, p. 134.

The Time Traveller, like Odysseus, has seen things that no other man of his time has seen. Like a prophet, he relates what he has learned, and even offers proof in the form of the flowers given him by the Eloi girl, Weena; and, like a prophet, he is not believed. True to the mythic pattern, he leaves his "land," or in this case, his time, to return to some other era, thus resuming his eternal quest.

The fact that The Time Machine, and Wells's other scientific romances, remain popular today, eighty years after the first publication, attests to the powerful grip on the imagination of the modern myths which make up its themes, and to the importance of Wells's skill at telling a story. For ultimately, it is because Wells was a superb spinner of tales that the mythic structures in his works are discernible to the reader. As a first novel, The Time Machine is an incredible achievement, and one which Wells was hard-pressed to match in his later works. The Time Machine remains a classic of science fiction, and H.G. Wells set the pace for many writers in the genre in this century.

Although Verne was the first popular science fiction writer (Aldiss declares that he was, at any rate, "the first to succeed in it commercially," [37]), and Wells is one of the first important influences on 20th century science fiction authors, many other writers around the turn of the century were dabbling with the tale of science and adventure, and with sf themes. Among the best known of these writers are Robert

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37. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, p. 95.

Louis Stevenson, whose The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886) contains many of the mythic patterns that Mary Shelley used in Frankenstein, and, like Frankenstein, has come to be viewed as a myth in its own right; Mark Twain, H. Rider Haggard, and Jerome K. Jerome, - all of whom turned out fantasies, ghost stories, and scientific romances; Rudyard Kipling, who used many sf themes in his stories, and whose poem, "The Voortrekker," recently inspired a short story by Poul Anderson; William Morris, Edward Bellamy, and Samuel Butler, who produced utopian novels; Thomas Hardy, in whose works evolution was a major influence and theme; [38] and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, most famous for his Sherlock Holmes stories, who also wrote a number of respectable sf stories for the popular magazines.

The most popular patterns and themes of the time included lost races and worlds, marvellous inventions, progress (or problems) through science, and of course, the ever-present, all-pervasive evolution. George Bernard Shaw made a lasting contribution to the myth of evolution when he wrote his plays Man and Superman (1903) and Back to Methuselah (1921). His theory of Creative Evolution has influenced virtually all science fiction treatments of evolution since the 1920's. A partial reading list, showing the extent of this influence, was published in the Shaw Review in a special edition on GBS and SF, [39] and Colin Wilson states that "since Shaw wrote

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38. An interesting discussion of Hardy's use of science fiction themes appears in Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, pp. 88-91.

39. John R. Pfeiffer, "A Shaw/Science Fiction Checklist," The Shaw Review, XVI (May, 1973), pp. 100-102.

Back to Methuselah, science fiction has become an established genre, and it has even become quite respectable." [40] (Moskowitz claims that it was the publication of Wells's The Time Machine in "The New Review" in 1895 that achieved respectability for science fiction.) Science fiction had become a very popular literary form, at any rate. Most of the major periodicals were publishing science fiction stories, and most of the important writers of the time used science fiction themes in some, at least, of their works. But there were changes in the wind; the profound social effects of World War I shifted the focus of literature, and changed the publishing habits -- and the history -- of science fiction in the twentieth century.

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40. Colin Wilson, "Prefatory Note," The Philosopher's Stone (New York: Warner Paperback Library, 1974), p. 18.

IV

With the War there came a change in public attitudes. The optimistic belief that science would make the world into a utopia for mankind had been shaken, and the potential of technology and science for destruction was brought home to people forcibly. The reading public still enjoyed stories about scientific discoveries, but for a while at least the emphasis moved from social concern in the Wells fashion to high adventure among the stars. Moskowitz points out that the science fiction of the gaslight era between 1891 and 1911 was almost always set in the times and the world in which the stories were written.[41] But now, when the world had become a terrible, tragic place, people wanted to escape. The author who was to succeed H.G. Wells in the public imagination as the most important writer of scientific romance was Edgar Rice Burroughs.

E.R. Burroughs is most widely known for his character, Tarzan. The ape man appeared for the first time in the October, 1912, issue of The All-Story, with the publication of the complete Tarzan of the Apes, the first of a series of highly succesful stories about one of literature's most famous heroic characters. But Burroughs's first novel was not about the jungle man; it was a delightful scientific

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41. Sam Moskowitz, pp. 12-13.

fantasy called Under the Moons of Mars, published as a serial under the by-line of "Norman Bean" between February and July, 1912, in The All-Story Magazine. [42] Burroughs wrote a series of "Mars" stories, featuring a transplanted earthman, John Carter, in a Mars that was a fascinating mixture of fact and fancy. There were also series set on Venus and in a subterranean world, Pellucidar. His works were straight adventure, with no attempts at extrapolation such as Wells's fiction always included. Burroughs only wanted to keep his readers entertained, and he succeeded.

Typical of the Burroughs romance is the use of a few facts to add not realism but glamour and excitement to the setting of the story. The Tarzan adventures mention tigers in Africa, where there are no tigers. Burroughs's version of Mars blends details gleaned from the work of Percival Lowell, the well-known astronomer, with descriptions of very earthly items to produce a world that is at once familiar and exotic. [43] The trees of his Mars are still trees, not the alien growth that one might have found if Wells had travelled in fiction to that world. It is not a concern for what things could be, or what they could mean, that moves Burroughs to place his heroes in settings like "Barsoom" (as his Martians call their world); it is simply the romance inherent in the idea of an intelligent species, struggling for survival on a dying planet, building canals large enough to be

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42. Moskowitz, Science Fiction by Gaslight, pp. 48-49.

43. A discussion of Lowell's ideas may be found in Intelligent Life in the Universe, I.S. Shklovskii and Carl Sagan (San Francisco: Holden-Day, Inc., 1966), pp. 275-278. The authors mention Burroughs's use of Lowell on pp. 276 and 364.

visible across the gulf of space, that appeals to the author, and to his audience. Brian Aldiss sums up the difference between E.R. Burroughs and H.G.Wells in a few words:

> Wells is teaching us to think. Burroughs and his lesser imitators are teaching us not to think.
>
> Of course, Burroughs is teaching us to wonder. 44.

This is an important point, and the reason that Burroughs is still enjoyable for the young reader, despite his lack of reality. Carl Sagan, one of the finest popularizers of science today, has described the impact of Burroughs on his own life:

> ... the name invented by Burroughs that has haunted me across the years is the name he imagined the Martians gave to Mars: Barsoom. And it was one phrase of his more than any other that captured my imagination: "The hurtling moons of Barsoom."
>
> ... We know how our solitary satellite looks to the naked eye from the surface of Earth. But what do the moons of Barsoom look like from the surface of Mars? This question, which intermittently plagued my boyhood, was not to be answered until 1971 and Mariner 9. 45.

The sense of wonder in Burroughs's writing was strong enough to help in the formation of a boy who was to become one of North America's brightest young scientists. If curiosity is not one of the motivating factors in Burroughs, it is at least one of the results his work achieves.

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44. Brian Aldiss, p. 158.

45. Carl Sagan, The Cosmic Connection, pp. 101-103.

The dominating myths in E.R. Burroughs's writings are the hero, the noble savage,[46] evolution (especially in his novel, The Land That Time Forgot, first published as a book in 1924), and alienation. This last myth is tied in with the author's attitudes towards sex and parents by Brian Aldiss and Leslie Fiedler. Aldiss mentions the "frequency with which mystery surrounds [the] birth" of heroes in Burroughs's works.

> Carter [of the Mars stories] recalls no childhood, has always been adult, and remains at about the age of thirty. Other instances of children, like Tarzan, lost to or estranged from parents are many .... The women of Mars, like the women of Caspak, are oviparous; in other terms, children are born away from or rejected by their mothers, rather as Tarzan is fostered by an inhuman creature. More widely, in psychoanalytical terms, to live on the Moon or another planet is to accept loss of contact with humanity. 47.

His public appeal, in terms of myth, lies in his use of the classic hero pattern. H.G. Wells had used the little man, the common everyday citizen of his contemporary world as the protagonist in his stories. But Burroughs created "supermen, true heroes with which [the readers] could identify, set against a background more colourful and enthralling than anything since the fairy tales of their youth."[48] And the presentation of his characters was much more skilful than Wells's characterizations had been. The less disturbing, but more romantic

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46. Cf. the discussion on this theme on pp. 16-17 above.

47. Aldiss, pp. 166-167. Aldiss quotes Fiedler on Burroughs on pp. 169 and 179.

48. Moskowitz, Science Fiction by Gaslight, p. 49.

and exotic heroes, settings, and situations of the scientific fantasies of E.R. Burroughs dominated the science fiction scene for a number of years, but there were other events in the field that should be mentioned, as well.

At about the time that Burroughs was beginning his career as a popular writer, science fiction began to move from the wide range of popular magazines into what are known as the "pulps." The reasons for this move are chiefly economic. The highest circulations among popular periodicals were achieved by women's and family-oriented magazines, whose readership was not particularly interested in science fiction. The pulps, printed on less expensive newsprint paper rather than on the slick, high quality paper of most magazines, offered a much better chance for the publication of science fiction works. The publisher who would set the pace for pulps was Frank A. Munsey.

Munsey's first pulp periodical was The Argosy. At a single issue price of only ten cents, The Argosy offered its readers adult adventure stories, with no illustrations to break up the nearly 200 pages of fiction each issue offered. At its peak, The Argosy had a readership of close to half a million. Although it was probably the first pulp in history, The Argosy was quickly followed by many other magazines; Munsey turned out Munsey's, The All-Story Magazine, and The Cavalier, all of which featured science fiction stories at one time or another. Munsey, as noted above, introduced the fiction of E.R. Burroughs to the reading

public in his magazines. Other important publications among the pulps included Street & Smith's The Popular Magazine, which serialized H. Rider Haggard's Ayesha: The Further History of She, beginning in January, 1905, and The Monthly Story Magazine (later The Blue Book Magazine), which introduced to American audiences the English horror/science fiction author, William Hope Hodgson, and was early to publish George Allen Angland, who was a major name in science fiction at the time. Moskowitz states that

> in historical perspective, what was happening becomes crystal clear. With the creation of the first pulp magazine, The Argosy, aimed primarily at adult readership, science fiction, because it lent itself to adventure, was incorporated into these predominantly male-oriented publications. 49.

Further strengthening the trend towards making science fiction a "masculine" genre was the inclusion of science fiction stories in the technical magazines of Hugo Gernsback, whose Electrical Experimenter and Science and Invention often featured comic tales about crackpot inventors along with factual and technical articles. It was Gernsback who, by the nineteen twenties, became the first man to publish all-sf pulps. The science fiction achievement awards are named for him: the "Hugos." His specialized pulps changed the face of science fiction for a generation, and completed the ghettoization of the genre that had begun with the shift into the male-oriented adventure pulps in the first decade of the twentieth century.

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49. The outline of the rise of the pulps is summarized from Sam Moskowitz's history, pp. 35-38. The quote may be found on pp. 37-38.

Although he has been hailed by some as the Father of Science Fiction, for others he is "one of the worst disasters ever to hit the science fiction field." [50] Like Verne, Gernsback was fascinated by marvellous inventions and technical gadgets. He was concerned with accuracy in the details of his "inventions" and those of his writers. But unlike Verne, he had no sense of story, or character, or literary style. And, while Verne was often willing to sacrifice his sense of accuracy if to stress it would damage his narrative, Gernsback was not. Science was all, for Gernsback. It was the only myth he loved.

But despite his own lack of literary understanding, Gernsback's magazines managed to attract a number of writers who were to make names for themselves in science fiction. In the twenties and early thirties, Gernsback's Amazing Stories and Science Wonder Stories attracted such authors as Murray Leinster, David H. Keller, Jack Williamson, Bob Olsen, Harl Vincent, and Philip F. Nowlan (the creator of Buck Rogers). They gave Gernsback more or less what he expected in a story, which means that scientific accuracy (at least, psuedo-scientific accuracy) was the major consideration. The story-lines were simple-minded, and the characters were cardboard. "As long as the stories were built like diagrams," writes Brian Aldiss,

> and made clear like diagrams, and stripped of atmosphere and sensibility, then it did not seem to matter how silly the "science" or the psychology was. 51.

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50. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, p. 209.

51. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, p. 210.

But even while Gernsback was changing the focus of magazine science fiction from the "bright colours" and bold adventure of the Burroughs-style interplanetary romance into the "grey contretemps and armistices of technocracy," [52] other writers were producing works in book form that have all the mythic power of great literature in them. Aldiss devotes a chapter of his history [53] to the discussion of such respected artists as C.S. Lewis, Aldous Huxley, and E.M. Forster, all of whom made contributions to the genre in the late twenties and early thirties, and to the much-neglected writer, Olaf Stapledon, a major influence in the sf field. His two great novels,

> Last and First Men and The Star Maker soar far beyond the accepted limits of science fiction. Or rather, one might say, Stapledon is the great classical example, the cold pitch of perfection as he turns scientific concepts into vast ontological epic prose poems, the ultimate sf writer. [54]

Stapledon's central myth is evolution, and his works have created a conscious mythology of events to support this theme. Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future (1930) first establishes his vision of the development of humanity from his present to a time two thousand million years in the future, when the last human species, the Sixteenth Men, await the end of their existence on the planet Neptune. At each stage of this metahistory, Stapledon offers a new variation on his theme of a constantly evolving humanity, and the final result of the work is a disturbing, unified vision of the frail human consciousness in a vast, indifferent universe.

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52. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, p. 211.

53. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, Chapter 8, pp. 181-214.

54. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, p. 208.

The Star Maker (1937) reveals that in Stapledon's cosmos, man is infinitesimal, and insignificant in the grand scheme of the universe, but that life itself is everywhere. The planets, the stars, the galaxies are all shown to be forms of intelligent life, merging into a great cosmic Mind, that of the Star Maker. This work is influenced by the perceptions of Einstein's relativity theory, and by Shaw's ideas of creative evolution and the Life Force. The enormity and complexity of its mythic pattern is stunning, and it is clearly a 20th century work, containing genuinely original perceptions. The Star Maker is a masterpiece of invention. [55]

In 1930, the year Stapledon released his first novel, a new author appeared on the magazine scene, along with a new magazine. The author was John W. Campbell, whose first story, "When the Atoms Failed," appeared in Gernsback's Amazing. The magazine was Astounding Stories of Super Science. By 1938, Campbell had become editor of Astounding, and with his concern for literary quality, a sense at least of realism, and logic in the stories he put into print, he soon began to gather in some of the brightest new talents in science fiction. By 1939, A.E. Van Vogt, Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, and Theodore Sturgeon had all made their maiden voyages into space through the pages of Campbell's Astounding. Thus began what sf fans lovingly call "The Golden Age."

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55. Interesting discussions of Stapledon's works may be found in Wollheim, The Universe Makers, pp. 32-36, and Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, pp. 201-208.

The central myth of the Golden Age of science fiction is the myth of Galactic Man, and its primary symbol is the rocket. This myth of hope, with its roots in the myths of science and progress, suggests that man will expand his civilization to encompass the galaxy. The classic example of the myth is Isaac Asimov's Foundation trilogy, published in the forties.[56] These novels, and the countless others like them,

> see man as a hero in a boundless universe given meaning and order by his intelligence and his accomplishments. It is a dream of other worlds made perfect by rational man and his tools. 57.

The rocket, as a symbol for this mythos, operates on several levels. The most obvious implication, in modern literary criticism, is the phallic meaning of its shape. Science fiction is still largely male-dominated, and the connection of the male sexual drive with the push for conquest of the universe is obvious. The rocket is also, of course, a symbol of the exalted technology that rational man is able to build, to carry him to the stars. But most important of all, the rocket is a symbol with universal human application, which need not be masculine. "In the dreams and fantasies of many modern people," writes

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56. The Foundation books were awarded a special Hugo in 1966 as "Best All-Time Series" by the members of the World Science Fiction Convention, "Tricon," at Cleveland, attesting to their continuing power and popularity. Donald Franson & Howard DeVore, A History of the Hugo, Nebula, and International Fantasy Award (Dearborn, Mich.: Howard DeVore, 1971), p. 32. An insert by D. Franson updates the work to 1972. All mentions of awards up to 1972 are taken from this work.

57. Thomas D. Clareson, SF: A Dream of Other Worlds (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Library, 1972), p. 11.

Joseph Henderson, "the flights of the great rockets of space research have often appeared as symbolic 20th-century embodiments of the urge toward liberation and release that is called transcendence."[58]

The myth of Galactic Man is, in this respect, related to the myth of evolution, and in many works in the fifties and sixties, the two themes are interwoven to produce a more complex pattern. Interesting examples of works combining the "history" of Galactic Man with the philosophy of a transcendent, creative evolution (in the Shavian sense of the term) include Gordon R. Dickson's "Childe" Cycle, Frank Herbert's Dune (and to a lesser extent, its sequels), and Arthur C. Clarke's Childhood's End and 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Dickson's "Childe" Cycle is still in progress, but when it is completed it will span a millenium of human history and evolution. The author proposes that the sane or whole man can be divided into three personality types, roughly the soldier, the philosopher, and the saint, who may also be a fanatic. The soldier is the man of action, the strict pragmatist. The philosopher is the man of thought, reason, and science. And of course, the saint and the fanatic signify faith. According to the Childe Cycle, man is in the process of dividing into his three parts, and will eventually, centuries from now, be reunited to form a stronger, whole-spectrum man again; and when this resolving of the disparate types occurs, if man has learned to be responsible, he will

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58. Joseph L. Henderson, "Ancient Myths and Modern Man," in Man and His Symbols, ed. Carl G. Jung (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), p. 157

be a higher form of man, a superman.

Dickson sets the beginning of his Cycle in the fourteenth century, in a proposed historical novel about Sir John Hawkewood, a soldier who led the forces trying to prevent the military takeover of Italy. Hawkewood becomes the first of Dickson's soldiers, and gives the cycle a basis in the real world of history. Other historical figures who will play important roles in the Childe Cycle include Milton, as the man of faith, Browning, as philosopher, and Santayana, as the twentieth century philosopher. From these characters, and from historical times, the Childe Cycle moves forward, drawing on a woman of faith, who will appear in the 1980's in a story yet to be written, the Dorsai, mercenary soldiers of the future, the Exotics, future philosophers, and the Friendlies, the fanatics and saints of tomorrow. The single character who binds all of the future elements together, signifying the three ages of man and the whole spectrum man who is the goal of evolution in the works, is Donal Graeme.

Donal first appears, chronologically, in Necromancer (1962), which is set some eighty years in the future. Donal is "unconscious" in much of the novel, in the sense that he does not realize his identity. But he is moved by fate to become involved with the Chantry Guild, a group interested in the occult who become the splinter group of humanity called the Exotics in the future. Donal, as "Paul Formain," (his adopted identity, since he has no memory of his real identity at first), operates on the level of intuition, a form of faith, while he is involved

with these men of philosophy.

Tactics of Mistake (1970) is set approximately one hundred years later, and sheds light on the still-evolving potentials of the human race. Humanity is now completely splintered, with the splinter groups scattered across the known worlds. Only a fairly small population of full spectrum men still remain on Earth. The reader is introduced to Cletus Grahame, who is to form the pattern for the Dorsai, which ultimately makes them the best military force the galaxy has seen. He maximizes their splinter-potential as soldiers by his plans. In Cletus, too, a suggestion of the evolving mental abilities of the human race is shown, when Cletus is able to restore a lost leg by willing it to grow back. He can also ignore pain, and can control his dreams to some extent. Mondar, of the Exotics splinter, informs the reader that the last two abilities are fairly common among his own group, but that the ability to grow back lost limbs is a new development. The element of creation has entered the evolutionary process, with man beginning to control his body.[60]

More than three centuries pass before Dickson brings Donal back into the Cycle in Soldier, Ask Not.[61] Donal is now a Dorsai soldier,

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59. Gordon R. Dickson, Tactics of Mistake (New York: DAW Books, Inc., 1972), pp. 133-135.

60. This aspect of evolution is found in Lamarck, Butler, and Shaw. R.N. Roy's work, Bernard Shaw's Philosophy of Life (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1964), offers a valuable discussion of the topic in Chapter 6, esp. pp. 118-134.

61. This work was first released in 1964 as a short story, and in that form won a Hugo in London in 1965. Franson and DeVore, p. 15.

a man of action. The character of Tam Olyn, the newsman from Earth (and therefore a whole spectrum man), is introduced in this story, and his contact with Donal first mentioned very briefly. The importance of this contact, in terms of the overall theme of the Cycle, is not made clear until the time of The Final Encyclopaëdia (at present unwritten), when Tam, now an old man, takes on the task of educating an infant found in an abandoned spaceship. That infant is revealed ultimately to be another incarnation of Donal, and with Tam's help, he moves towards the rediscovery of himself as Donal, and towards reuniting the splinter groups with whole spectrum man. Through Donal, the real and the ideal characteristics of the superman will eventually be realized in this novel and in the last novel in the Cycle, which will be called Childe.[62]

The "Childe" Cycle of Gordon Dickson is a massive work, sweeping across time, backwards and forwards from the present, and moving out from the Earth, to other worlds, and back again. Its evolutionary scheme offers refinements on the theories of earlier writers, that are both logical and humanly realistic. Dickson's vision is an inspiring one in many ways, and the mythic galaxy he has created has led to the formation of fan groups based on his Dorsai (the Dorsai Irregulars, who do security work for science fiction conventions) and on the Exotics (a group is now in the process of organizing, with the intention of studying the philosophic ideas of the "Childe" Cycle).

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62. The information on Dickson's cycle comes from a speech given by the author on "The Philosophy of the 'Childe' Cycle" in Ann Arbor on March 20, 1976.

A long novel dealing with the myth of evolution is Frank Herbert's Dune (1965), winner of the Best Novel Hugo at Cleveland in 1966. Dune sets up a historical structure for the events it records, complete with its own complex political, social, and religious systems, and a healthy growth of myths to complement those systems. In style, it contains elements of the Burroughsian interplanetary romance, as well as the broad scope of the Galactic Man myth. The combination is a happy one, for the novel is a delight of sensual detail and thoughtful extrapolation of scientific thought.

The science of Dune is ecology, and Herbert uses it to suggest a planetary evolution, based on conscious control by the human inhabitants of the ecological structure of their world, the desert planet, Arrakis. The dryness of the planet is not simply a little fact, mentioned and forgotten; it underlies everything in the work. Northrop Frye has mentioned "an increasing popularity of the flood archetype," in science fiction as well as in other art forms.[63] Numerous examples of this archetypal pattern come to mind, in the form that Aldiss calls "the cosy catastrophe,"[64] chiefly, including most of the works of J.G. Ballard and John Wyndham. Wyndham's The Kraken Wakes (1953) makes literal use of a flood, destroying most of the world. In Dune, Herbert inverts the mythic meaning of the flood, to present a picture of a world where a flood is seen as a miraculous

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63. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 203.

64. Aldiss, Billion Year Spree, p. 293.

and wonderful event, rather than as a destructive one.

The myths of Dune include a variation on the archetype of the hero-king in the character of Paul Atreides, or Muad'Dib, and a theme of personal, human evolution in the same character. Paul is the product of controlled evolution through the efforts of a mystic sisterhood, the Bene Gesserit. His mother, a member of the sisterhood, has chosen to produce a son, rather than the daughter that was expected of her, in the hopes that her son would be the "saviour" predicted by legend, the "Kwisatz Haderach" who had a preternatural wisdom and the ability to predict the future. Her hopes were fulfilled. Paul-Muad'Dib says of himself,

> I am a net in the sea of time, free to sweep future and past. I am a moving membrane from whom no possibility can escape. 65.

In the legends of the Fremen, the desert people of Arrakis, Muad'Dib is associated with an earth spirit, and with a pattern visible on their second moon. [66] Paul is from another world, and this association of him with a place from out of the world of Dune, as Arrakis is called, is suitable. When the two associations, of off-world and earth-spirit, are viewed together, an element of divine irony is added to the name.

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65. Frank Herbert, "Appendix II: The Religion of Dune," Dune (New York: Ace Books, Inc., 1965), p. 517.

66. Herbert, Dune, p. 533.

Paul-Muad'Dib is a saviour from another world (from heaven, in a sense), a prophet, and the leader-king of his adopted people. In the Fremen language, the muad'dib is a kangaroo-like mouse with the ability to survive in the harsh desert. Since Paul-Muad'Dib is the chief of his new people, and is associated with this little animal, Herbert implies that the spirit of his vision, the spirit of his people as well, will survive. Thus, the author has loaded the name of his central character with a multitude of associations, giving the name itself an almost mythic quality.

Dune is a dense, complex work, consciously mythic in its content. "Religion often partakes of the myth of progress that shields us from the terrors of an uncertain future," states Herbert through his hero, Paul-Muad'Dib. [67] So does science fiction. With its trend-setting concerns with ecology and alternative life-styles (as Paul's father, the new ruler of Arrakis, throws out old customs he considers degrading to the human spirit [68]), Dune makes use of its myths of evolution, progress, and the Galactic Man to make comments about human activities on our own, present-day Earth, and suggestions about our possible tomorrows. Paul is the Kwisatz Haderach, and his title means "the shortening of the way." [69] Through the myth of concern, symbolized here by Paul's ecological planning, humanity may hasten the next step in the evolutionary pattern. "Greatness," says

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67. Herbert, Dune, p. 517.

68. Herbert, Dune, pp. 134-135.

69. Herbert, Dune, p. 531.

Herbert, "is a transitory experience... It depends in part upon the myth-making imagination of humankind. The person who experiences greatness must have a feeling for the myth he is in." [70] Paul Atreides, the Muad'Dib of Fremen legend, has the feeling of his life-myth. And Frank Herbert is able to record this moment of fictional greatness in all the power of its collective pattern of myths.

Arthur C. Clarke is another writer who makes use of the myths of evolution and progress in his works. Two of his novels that deal with these myths most explicitly are Childhood's End (1953) and 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), a novel based on the screenplay he co-authored with Stanley Kubrick. 2001 takes a historical overview, and opens in the "Primeval Night," before man has quite become human. Childhood's End begins somewhere in the 1970's, twenty years after the publication date of the story. But both deal with the next step in the evolution of the human race.

The mythic imagery of Childhood's End is Biblical. When the newest generation of children seem "different" to their parents, and it becomes obvious that something new has come to the Earth, a ship arrives from space, bearing the "Overlords," aliens whose purpose is to direct the changing human race away from the cradle of Earth. The

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70. Herbert, Dune, p. 133.

Overlords have reached an evolutionary dead-end, but because they are virtually immortal, they have taken on the task of helping other races to evolve into higher forms. In appearance, the Overlords are the picture of the devil, taken directly from Christian mythology:

> There was no mistake. The leathery wings, the little horns, the barbed tail -- all were there. The most terrible of all legends had come to life, out of the unknown past. Yet now it stood smiling, in ebon majesty, with the sunlight gleaming upon its tremendous body, and with a human child resting trustfully on either arm. 71.

Clarke makes use of symbol throughout the work. The image of the satan-like Overlords suggests the "evil" that they bring: the end of the human race. But at the same time, the Overlords had remade the face of the Earth, so that it was a true Utopia.[72] The great ship in which the Overlords arrived is also a symbol, used not only by Clarke but by his aliens as well, of the summoning of the future, the wonders of progress, and the changes in the human race. And, when one man chooses to find out what he can about the homeworld of the Overlords, and hides himself aboard their great ship, he uses the image of the Trojan Horse (a most appropriate myth, since he lives in a community named after Athens, the birthplace of western culture). But the central myth of the novel is yet another version of Shaw's creative evolution.

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71. Arthur C. Clarke, Childhood's End (New York: Ballantine Books, 1953), p. 68.

72. Clarke, Childhood's End, pp. 69-76.

Clarke offers a complete explanation of his version of the theory of evolution in the last portion of the novel. Portions of the theory are reminiscent of Stapledon, such as the conception of an Overmind, a cosmic Life Force of sorts that the Overlords theorize

> is trying to grow, to extend its powers and its awareness of the universe. By now it must be the sum of many races, and long ago it left the tyranny of matter behind. It is conscious of intelligence, everywhere. 73.

The children who have been born on Earth are no longer human children. They are the beginnings of the higher form, the next evolutionary stage, which is being called to join the Overmind. The long childhood of the race is over.

In the last few pages of the book, the character Jan, who had hidden aboard the Overlords' ship to go to their home among the stars is returned to Earth, to find that he is the Last Man. In a thoughtful study of the moods of the only survivor of homo sapiens, and a full revelation at last of the role of the Overlords, Clarke reveals the importance of the Jungian theory of the racial unconscious (or a form of it, at least) to his theme.

> "When our ships entered your skies a century and a half ago, that was the first meeting of our two races, though of course we had studied you from a distance. And yet you feared and recognized us, as we knew that you would. It was not precisely a memory. You have already had proof that time is more complex than your science ever imagined.

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73. Clarke, Childhood's End, p. 183.

> For that memory was not of the past, but of the future -- of those closing years when your race knew that everything was finished. We did what we could, but it was not an easy end. And because we were there, we became identified with your race's death. Yes, even while it was ten thousand years in the future! It was as if a distorted echo had reverberated round the closed circle of time, from the future to the past. Call it not a memory, but a premonition." 74.

The memory of man is tied up in his soul, his spirit, or whatever name one chooses to give to the collective heritage of the race, and, as part of the Overmind, which has "left the tyranny of matter behind," is outside of considerations of time and space. Clarke's myth of the next step in human evolution is structured as a circle, representing the fulfillment of the species.

The image of the Star Child, at the end of 2001, is similarly cast in a circle, this time a visual image of energy protecting the newly-evolved man-infant, David Bowman, who has gone beyond man. The aliens who guide Bowman through his painful growth into a superman are not presented face-to-face with the reader in this novel, as they were in the earlier work. In their place is the mysterious black monolith, the beacon that signals man's first hesitant steps from the Earth-womb out into his universe, and that opens what Clarke calles "The Star Gate" of revelation for Bowman. The human race in this novel has been followed from the first awakening of intelligence in the ape-man, Moonwatcher (spurred by the arrival of the monolith on Earth) through the transformation of the human David Bowman into the superhuman Star Child, and Clarke has shown the

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74. Clarke, Childhood's End, p. 207.

reader, through Bowman's experience, the evolutionary pattern of the universe itself, from the "big bang" that began the cosmic dance of the stars and planets to the moment of the Star Child's appearance. The idea of a controlling intelligence is again suggested by the author:

> It was not fear of the galactic gulf that chilled his soul, but a more profound disquiet, stemming from the unborn future. For he had left behind the time scales of his human origin; now, as he contemplated that band of starless night, he knew his first intimations of the Eternity that yawned before him.
>
> Then he remembered that he would never be alone, and his panic slowly ebbed. The crystal-clear perception of the universe was restored to him -- not, he knew, wholly by his own efforts. When he needed guidance in his first faltering steps, it would be there. 75.

In these two novels, Clarke's men stand on the threshold of space. The idea of Galactic Man remains a myth, not yet realized by the inhabitants of Earth; but that it is an operative myth of the people in both books is important. Jan, the Last Man in Childhood's End, wants to see his human race on all the worlds of space. The ship of the Overlords is an important symbol of the dream of progress, of man's eventual conquest of space. In 2001, it is only when man has been able to reach across the void to his moon, in a first step from his confinement on one small world, that the unseen superior beings begin to guide the astronaut Bowman towards them; and it is man's first trip to Jupiter, and beyond, that allows Bowman to evolve into a higher being than homo sapiens. Clarke's message, apparently, is that the

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75. Arthur C. Clarke, 2001: A Space Odyssey (New York: Signet Books, 1968), p. 220.

myth of Galactic Man is intimately connected with human evolution; if man makes it into the galaxy, it will not be simply because of his technology, but because of a growth in the human spirit itself. Bowman is a cosmic Odysseus, whose travels have carried him into stranger realms of both inner and outer space than any man before him. He returns, utterly transformed by his experiences. His is an odyssey that ultimately, the human race itself must make.

The image of the lone human being, visiting strange realms of space, is a recurrent one in modern science fiction. Clarke's Jan and Bowman represent this type, as does Herbert's Paul Atreides in Dune. The mythic figure of the alienated outsider is a standard and central character in the Hainish works of Ursula K. LeGuin, and her use of this archetype creates a structual continuity among books whose primary theme is the complexity of human evolution across both time and space.

In the introduction to the anthology Women of Wonder, Pamela Sargent writes that in the fifties and sixties, the number of women writing science fiction grew at a time when "not coincidentally, science fiction writers and readers were ... reexamining the assumptions and the style of much science fiction." [76] A number of writers who first appeared at the time have since become important in the field. Their works make use of some of the devices of science, but the focus

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76. Pamela Sargent, "Introduction: Women in Science Fiction," in Women of Wonder, Science Fiction Stories by Women about Women (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), p. xxvii.

of their work is more clearly on the characters than on the gadgets. The myth of Galactic Man began as a technology-oriented myth, in the forties, but its development has been towards a human orientation, and the emergence of talented, sensitive writers in the sixties to deal with the human themes of sf is a natural stage in the evolution of the genre.

Ursula K. LeGuin began writing in the early sixties. Her most important writings, to date, have been the stories that make up the Hainish works, united by a common background. LeGuin uses some of the familiar hardware of sf, including faster-than-light starships and instantaneous radio transmitters; but the most important science for her is anthropology, and she directs her attention to the effects of the devices and the varied cultures her stories describe on her characters. For a while, science fiction seemed to exist only to promote the wonders of science, and to glorify existing social prejudices. In writers such as LeGuin, there is a return to the original purpose of the genre, which was to study the effects of science and society on man. The galaxy of the Hainish stories, like our own galaxy, is evolving in darkness towards an unseen end. The pen of the author is able to occasionally illuminate some facet of human truth along the way.

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The first of the Hainish stories is Rocannon's World (1966),[77] in which LeGuin establishes the pattern that she will follow in her later works in the group. The tale revolves around Rocannon, the Director of a survey team from the League of All Worlds, which is establishing contact with the intelligent races of a planet circling the star Fomalhaut. The League represents a small group of human worlds scattered across the galaxy, whose home planet, Hain, or Davenant, is the birthplace of the human races. Rocannon sets the tone of the novel, when he says:

> "What I feel sometimes is that I ... meeting these people from worlds we know so little of, you know, sometimes ... that I have as it were blundered through the corner of a legend, of a tragic myth, maybe, which I do not understand...."[78]

As the Hainish opus begins to expand, it will be learned that all of the human races originally came from the same basic racial stock, so that Rocannon's statement has ironic implications. In this novel, the poetic tone of the remark complements LeGuin's writing style and her use of the outsider myth, so that the entire novel takes on the quality of myth.

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77. The prologue of the novel was originally published as a short story called "The Dowry of Angyar" in the Sept., 1964, Amazing, according to Jeff Levin, "Ursula K. LeGuin: A Select Bibliography," in Science-Fiction Studies, II, 7 (Nov., 1975), p. 205.

78. Ursula K. LeGuin, Rocannon's World (New York: Ace Books, 1966), p. 24.

Rocannon is isolated early in the novel, when an unknown enemy from outside the League destroys his ship, his ansible (an instantaneous transmitter that allows him to talk to other worlds with no time loss), and his companions on the survey team. Left alone, among races which may have had some common ancestry with his, and some that certainly did not, Rocannon is the outsider, the Starlord whose perceptions colour the telling of the story, and whose uniqueness is to change human history.

In a pattern which is used in all of the Hainish novels, LeGuin's hero begins a journey which will affect his own life, the culture he adopts on the planet (and the other cultures, in their relations with "his" culture), and the evolution of the League of All Worlds, symbol of the entire human race. Rocannon's journey is to find the enemy, and use their own tools, their ansible, to warn the League of the danger of invasion which they pose.

This basic pattern, of a hero who is an outsider, is visible in each of the Hainish stories. In Planet of Exile (1966), the "hero" is a tiny colony of men, exiled and dying out on a strange world, who must journey to the city of the natives, in order that both races may survive the terrors of an abnormally harsh winter. City of Illusions (1967) pits a solitary man, Falk, against the Shing, the mysterious enemy who have taken control of Earth and threaten his home world, Werel (the Planet of Exile of the previous novel); his journey is a double one, since he must first find his own identity,

and then return to his world, to warn it of the danger that the Shing pose. The Left Hand of Darkness (1969), one of the most important of LeGuin's books, tells of the human (Terran) ambassador, Genly Ai, and his archetypal winter journey [79] on a world where the people are neither male nor female, and yet both, so that he is an outsider physically and psychologically. In a complication at the end of the story, Genly Ai is shown to have become an outsider to his own kind of humans, as a result of his long, close association with the Gethenian people. His journey, like that of Falk, operates on a physical, literal level, where he is at least partly moved by political machinations, and also on a psychological level, in which he becomes estranged from his own people, and committed to his new world. "Vaster Than Empires and More Slow" (1971), a story that is connected to the main work of the novels, offers a group of misfits, all of whom are outsiders in their own cultures, who journey to a new world on the edges of explored space, seeking peace of mind as well as the right to important work. The Dispossessed (1974), which may be LeGuin's most significant work to date, relates the journey of a man from one world in a two-world system to the other, and deals mostly with isolation and politics on an intellectual and psychological plane.

In each novel, the basic structure is complemented by pieces of

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79. David Ketterer explores this mythic theme in his essay, "The Left Hand of Darkness: Ursula K. LeGuin's Archetypical 'Winter-Journey,'" in his book New Worlds for Old (New York: Doubleday, 1974).

legend and myth that shed light on the human themes of the work as well as on the particular cultures from which the myths have arisen. In Rocannon's World, the history of the world is presented through its myths, and the story of Rocannon's journey is shown as a myth in the process of creating itself. Legends among the different clans on the planet have foretold the coming of a Wanderer, and Rocannon's strangeness easily allows him to take on this identity. The little people, the Fiia, resemble the elves of Terran folk-lore, and one of the little folk travels with Rocannon, adding to the air of myth that already surrounds him.

> The shadow of a smile went across the Fian's face. He raised his hands, parallel and apart. Rushlight in sconces on the walls bowed and flickered and changed. "It was foretold that the Wanderer would choose companions," he said. "For a while." 80.

By the end of his journey, Rocannon is again alone. One by one, the handful of companions he selects to accompany him either leave him by choice (as does Kyo, the little Fian) or by death (as does Mogien, his closest friend among the Angyar, his "adopted" people).

The death of Mogien has its mythic elements, too. In a discussion of the archetypal elements of a typical human dream, Jolande Jacobi suggests that the hero must suffer (or even die) in order for good

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80. LeGuin, Rocannon's World, p. 48.

to be accomplished.[81] In this novel, Rocannon must learn to listen to the speech of his enemies' minds. The force that can give him this knowledge demands in return

> That which you hold dearest and would least willingly give....
> A thing, a life, a chance; an eye, a hope, a return; the name need not be known. But you will cry its name aloud when it is gone. 82.

Rocannon agrees to the demand, little knowing what it is he will be asked to give up. When his newly-acquired gift finds the enemy, and draws them to him, it is his friend who is taken.

> Clouds wreathed and drifted across the abyss.
>
> "Mogien!"
>
> Rocannon cried the name aloud. There was no answer. There was only pain, and fear, and silence. 83.

But the sacrifice of Mogien allows Rocannon to get to the ansible in the enemy ship, signal the League, and effect the destruction of the enemy on his world. True to the archetypal pattern, good has come out of the evil of Mogien's death.

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81. Jolande Jacobi, Complex/Archetype/Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung, Ralph Manheim, trans. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 142.

82. LeGuin, Rocannon's World, p. 118.

83. LeGuin, Rocannon's World, p. 123.

Having destroyed his enemy, Rocannon ends his journey. He chooses to stay among the people he met on his way, and dies with them, an outsider always. His own people eventually make the eight-year trip to bring him home, but only his memory remains, in the people he loved; and the personal legend of Rocannon is completed when the League names the planet Rocannon's World, to honour his heroic journey.

Similar myths may be found in each of the Hainish novels. But the work which is richest in its mythic content and impact is The Left Hand of Darkness, which won the Hugo and Nebula awards for Best Novel in 1970. The League of All Worlds has evolved by the time of this novel into the Ekumen, a more mystical and vague structure than the original League form. According to Ian Watson's internal chronology of the stories, Rocannon's World is set in the League Year 334, and The Left Hand of Darkness occurs in the League Year 2520, making it the furthest of the Hainish stories into the future.[84] In this novel, LeGuin's outsider-hero, Genly Ai, describes the Ekumen to his Gethenian companion, Therem Harth rem ir Estraven:

> In a certain sense the Ekumen is not a body politic, but a body mystic. It considers beginnings to be extremely important. Beginnings, and means. Its doctrine is just the reverse of the doctrine that the end justifies the means. It proceeds, therefore, by subtle ways, and slow ones, and queer, risky ones; rather as evolution does, which is in certain senses its model.... 85.

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84. Ian Watson, "LeGuin's Lathe of Heaven and the Role of Dick," Science-Fiction Studies, II, 5 (March, 1975), p. 68.

85. Ursula K. LeGuin, The Left Hand of Darkness (New York: Ace Books, 1969), p. 245.

This passage offers an explanation for not simply the Ekumen, or League, but for the complete series of Hainish stories. At first glance, none of the stories can be directly related to any of the other stories. But viewed collectively, the inter-relatedness of the works becomes more obvious. Together, the stories present a history of the evolution of humanity, of Galactic Man, through the unifying body which is now called the Ekumen. The name, Ekumen, is from the word ecumenical, meaning universal. The members of the Ekumen are all human, and all stem originally from the Hainish men. Each member world has evolved in a different way, because of the natural facts of planetary conditions; but the inhabitants remain human, despite their apparent differences.

Genly Ai learns this basic fact in the course of his stay among the Gethenians. At first, he views their unusual sexual make-up as abnormal and inhuman, the result, perhaps, of some forgotten and abandoned experiment in controlled genetics. But as he learns to see the Gethenians as human beings, he comes to recognize the duality of his "normal" viewpoint as being strange. One of Genly's predecessors from the Ekumen on Winter, or Gethen, writes in his field notes:

> What is very hard for us to understand is that, four-fifths of the time, these people are not sexually motivated at all. Room is made for sex, plenty of room; but a room, as it were, apart. The society of Gethen, in its daily functioning and in its continuity, is without sex...
>
> There is no division of humanity into strong and weak halves, protective/protected, dominant/submissive, owner/chattel,

> active/passive. In fact the whole tendency to dualism that pervades human thinking may be found to be lessened, or changed, on Winter. 86.

By giving her Gethenian characters a unique sexual system, in which each individual contains both male and female, LeGuin allows the reader an opportunity to examine the myths of sexuality that play so large a role in our own culture. On Winter, male and female roles do not exist. Men and women do not exist. There are only human beings. Genly and Estraven, alone after a long period of time on the Ice in their flight to Estraven's country, come to realize the differences in outlook that human sexuality has fostered in their two races. With the approach of kemmer, the Gethenian fertile period, Estraven finds himself becoming "female" (or the Gethenian equivalent), and asks Genly about human women. The Terran man finds he cannot give an adequate answer, since Estraven has none of the basic myth-beliefs that make up the human substitute for genuine understanding.

> After he had stared a long time at the glowing stove, he shook his head. "Harth," he said, "I can't tell you what women are like. I never thought about it much in the abstract, you know, and -- God! -- by now I've practically forgotten. I've been here two years .... You don't know. In a sense, women are more alien to me than you are. With you, I share one sex, anyhow ...." He looked away and laughed, rueful and uneasy. My own feelings were complex, and we let the matter drop. 87.

Having been isolated from others of his own, bisexual race, and from

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86. LeGuin, Left Hand..., pp. 93-94.

87. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 223.

the cultural myths of Earth, Genly Ai has begun to learn that he has never understood the human element of women, or of men, for that matter; he has relied only on cultural assumptions, or myths, for his knowledge. By the time he returns to the city of Erhenrang, from which he began his journey, Genly finds it natural to think in terms of human, rather than male or female. He finds the separation of the two halves of the human personality disturbing:

> But they all looked strange to me, men and women, well as I knew them. Their voices sounded strange: too deep, too shrill. They were like a troupe of great, strange animals, of two different species: great apes with intelligent eyes, all of them in rut, in kemmer.... They took my hand, touched me, held me. I managed to keep myself in control... When we got to the Palace, however, I had to get to my room at once.
>
> The physician from Sassinoth came in. His quiet voice and his face, a young, serious face, not a man's face and not a woman's, a human face, these were a relief to me, familiar, right.... 88.

But while sexual attitudes are different on Winter, the tendency to think in dual terms, which LeGuin mentions in the passage quoted above on page 66, is still very much present. "Duality is an essential," says Estraven, "so long as there is myself and the other." LeGuin uses a number of images to suggest the importance of duality and unity in the novel. For, ultimately, the two concepts are inter-related. According to the Gethenian poem from which the novel takes its title,

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88. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 279.

> Light is the left hand of darkness
> and darkness the right hand of light.
> Two are one, life and death, lying
> together like lovers in kemmer,
> like hands joined together,
> like the end and the way. 89.

"Two are one;" the uniting of the apparent opposites makes the whole. Genly realizes the basic truth in this idea from the fragments of conversations with Estraven, and shows the Gethenian the familiar symbol of the double curve within the circle, one half dark, the other light. When Estraven doesn't know the symbol, he explains:

> "It's found on Earth, and on Hain-Davenant, and on Chiffewar. It is yin and yang. Light is the left hand of darkness... how did it go? Light, dark. Fear, courage. Cold, warmth. Female, male. It is yourself, Therem. Both and one. A shadow on snow." 90.

The opposites, in reality, are not true opposites, but simply parts of one another, clarifying the existence of both.

Images of duality and of wholeness abound in the work. Estraven makes a number of references to "the wheel" throughout the long winter journey, suggesting unity in the circular form, as well as movement -- an evocation of the evolutionary theme of the novel? He also points out that sunlight is not enough for a traveller in Winter; "We need the shadows, in order to walk." 91 In the mystic quasi-religious group, the Handarra, the ability to foretell future events has become a discipline; light and darkness function symbolically in LeGuin's

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89. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 222.

90. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 252.

91. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 252.

description of a Foretelling. The centre of a session is the Gethenian, Faxe, called the Weaver because he attempts to create, to weave, a pattern from the threads of telepathic communications in the group of Foretellers. Genly asks if Winter will become a member of the Ekumen of Known Worlds within five years:

> Hours and seconds passed, the moonlight shone on the wrong wall, there was no moonlight only darkness, and in the centre of all darkness Faxe: the Weaver: a woman, a woman dressed in light. The light was silver, the silver was armor, an armored woman with a sword. The light burned sudden and intolerable, the light along her limbs, the fire, and she screamed aloud in terror and pain, "Yes, yes, yes!" 92.

From the darkness of the universe-in-space the Weaver draws the light of truth. The Handarra have few prayers or sayings; but one which they favour says, "Praise then darkness, and Creation unfinished!"[93]

The concept of duality-and-unity works well in connection with the myth of evolution in The Left Hand of Darkness. The chant of the Handarra draws the inter-relatedness of the themes in its evocation of darkness, the right hand of light, and the still spinning wheel of creation. According to a myth of Gethen, man is followed by a piece of darkness, his shadow, because he exists in the middle of time;[94] creation has not yet ended.

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92. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 67.

93. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 232.

94. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 226.

The shadow, symbolic of human frailty (representing the death that will eventually overtake him), plays an important part in the cultural myths of Gethen. In Estraven's country, Karhide, the people have an indefinable quality and social custom which they call "shifgrethor," which refers to a man's shadow. Because of the complexity of the idea, LeGuin does not attempt to give a simple definition, preferring instead to allow the reader to infer something of the meaning of the term through its usage. It has to do with the concept of "saving face" in our culture, to some extent; a closer correlation is virtually impossible. But an individual whose shifgrethor has been impugned is said to have had his shadow shortened. When Estraven is exiled from Karhide because of political intrigues involving Genly Ai, the Envoy from the Ekumen, it is seen by many as a comment on his King, not on Estraven: "The king shortens no man's shadow, though he may try." [95]

The exile of Estraven is parallelled in the novel by a Gethenian myth called "Estraven the Traitor." It should be noted that Estraven is a title, a landname, signifying that Therem Harth is the heir of the Lord of the clan called Estre. The myth tells of his ancestor, in the legendary days of "long ago." This earlier Estraven, having fallen through the ice in winter, and half frozen from the cold, finds help in the home of his enemy, whose name was Therem of Stok. The two swear kemmering, and are lovers for two nights and two days, until

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95. LeGuin, The Left Hand..., p. 258.

Estraven is discovered and killed. Therem bears Estraven's child, and gives the infant to the Lord of Estre, a life for the life that was taken. The child is named Therem, although that name was never used in Estre before. When he grew up, he was named heir to the old lord, and the other young men, his hearth-brothers, were envious and tried to murder him. He defeated and killed them, but was injured, and found help from an old man, who was Therem of Stok. The two vowed peace between their houses, and when he became Lord of Estre, the young Therem gave a portion of disputed land to Stok to settle their old feud. It was this action, and the killing of his hearth-brothers, which earned him the name Estraven the Traitor, although his name of Therem is still given to children of Estre. [96]

The later Estraven, friend to Genly Ai, is called a traitor by his King, but he remains beloved to his people. He tries to get his country's enemies, the people of Orgota, to accept Genly's message of welcome from the Ekumen when his own country has rejected it. But, like the Therem of the myth, his namesake, he is not betraying his people by this action. Genly explains this to Argaven, the King:

> "He [Estraven] knew that, whichever nation first made alliance with the Ekumen, the other would follow soon: as it will: as Sith and Perunter and the Archipelago will also follow, until you find unity. He loved his country very dearly, sir, but he

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96. LeGuin, Left Hand..., pp. 120-125.

did not serve it, or you. He served the master I serve."

"The Ekumen?" said Argaven, startled.

"No. Mankind." 97.

LeGuin introduces several of the myths of Winter in the course of the novel. Each of them offers a rough parallel, inexact in its details, to some point in the story. Myth is used in this work as the left hand of reality, the intangible half of Winter's culture that sheds light on the whole.

While Genly Ai is the outsider-hero, Estraven carries some of the weight of hero. He is at times Genly's shadow, especially in the chapters where Genly is among the Orgotan people. Only Estraven's personal suffering, in his exile, hardships on the Ice, and death at the hands of his enemies, makes it possible for Genly's mission to succeed. The idea that the hero must suffer in order to win the greater good, already mentioned in connection with Rocannon's World, above, is repeated here, then, in the dual heroes of Estraven, who loses his home and his life, and Genly Ai, who loses Estraven, but wins a world for the Ekumen.

The focus on Therem Harth rem ir Estraven throughout the novel allows him to become a symbol of his world, and his culture. Through the myth of Estraven the Traitor, the reader sees his past, and gains

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97. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 276.

an understanding of his motivations. Through his actions in the story, he reveals his personality, in all its human complexity. And because he is human, the reader can extend the symbolic importance of Estraven to include the entire human culture-complex of the Ekumen itself. Estraven explains to Genly that he once travelled out onto the unpopulated Ice simply for

> "Curiosity, adventure." He hesitated and smiled slightly. "The augmentation of the complexity and intensity of the field of intelligent life," he said, quoting one of my Ekumenical quotations.
>
> "Ah: you were consciously extending the evolutionary tendency inherent in Being; one manifestation of which is exploration." We were both well pleased with ourselves.... 98.

In Estraven, then, the theme of evolution itself is embodied. As Genly says, Estraven is what it is all about. He is the symbol, uniting all the myths and themes into one pattern, not foretelling as Faxe the Weaver does, but simply Being.

Ian Watson has placed the events of The Left Hand of Darkness in the year 4870 AD, [99] making it, temporally, the most remote story in LeGuin's Hainish group. At the other end of the time scale lies the short story, "The Day Before the Revolution," and the novel, The

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98. LeGuin, Left Hand..., pp. 200-201.

99. Watson, "LeGuin's Lathe of Heaven...," p. 68.

Dispossessed (1974). According to Watson's chronology, The Dispossessed occurs in the year 2300 AD, fifty years before the League of All Worlds is begun. "The Day Before the Revolution" (1974) is set two hundred years before the novel, and serves as a "prequel" to it, offering information that deepens the reader's understanding of the social and political systems described in the novel. Evolution's social companion, revolution, is the subject of the short story. And the central myth of the novel is the myth of Utopia.

Like The Left Hand of Darkness, The Dispossessed won both the popular award, the Hugo, and the professional writers' award, the Nebula. Like all of LeGuin's Hainish stories, The Dispossessed is in part at least a summary of the theme of unity, briefly explored above in connection with The Left Hand of Darkness, and the theme of evolution which underlies the entire opus. These concepts have been shown in the earlier novels as operative in the Ekumen's structure. In The Dispossessed, the reader is shown the development of the concepts from the ideal condition of a goal for the future to the realizable fact of the League of All Worlds, through the work of a scientist, the outsider-hero of the novel, Shevek.

Shevek is the product of an experiment in Utopia which apparently has succeeded. His world, Anarres, is peopled by the descendants of an anarchist revolution on the home world of their two-planet system, the lush, green world called Urras. LeGuin's subtitle for the novel

is "An Ambiguous Utopia," and as the reader is shown both planets, with their vastly different social systems and ecological conditions, the importance of that subtitle is brought forcefully home. Anarres is a harsh world, where hardship is normal and famine is not uncommon. But its people have achieved a certain freedom, not to be found in the richer home planet of Urras. Men and women have gained a practical equality, revealed in their use of non-sexual names. LeGuin often introduces a character by name only, giving indications that tend to suggest the character is male, such as talking about the scientific studies that the character has done, only to explode the myth of sexual role-playing in the reader's face by bringing onstage a woman. This use of non-indicative names, which give no clue of the character's sex, is an effective device for the exploration of this myth of our society. It points out the fact of equality between the sexes on Anarres in a most dramatic manner.

Urras, in contrast, is an exaggeration of contemporary North American culture. Woman are treated as inferiors, and have developed as a result a secret power lust, which leads them to manipulate men ruthlessly by using their sexual attractiveness. Like all slaves, the women of Urras want to be the masters. The wealth of their culture, which is strongly capitalistic in contrast with the socialist collectivism of Anarres, enables the women to adorn themselves with every lure that nature and industry can provide, from furs and perfumes to see-through blouses. Their power-games have become the substitute for that

intellectual development they are denied. Universities on Urras are closed to women.

But despite the social inequality, and its resultant undercurrents of war between the sexes, Urras is a beautiful world. To Keng, the Terran Ambassador on Urras, it is Utopia:

> "To me, and to all my fellow Terrans who have seen the planet, Urras is the kindliest, most various, most beautiful of all the inhabited worlds. It is the world that comes as close as any could to Paradise."
>
> She looked at him calmly and keenly; he said nothing.
>
> "I know it's full of evils, full of human injustice, greed, folly, waste. But it is also full of good, of beauty, vitality, achievement. It is what a world should be! It is alive, tremendously alive -- alive, despite all its evils, with hope." 100.

To Shevek, the man from Anarres, the man from the moon of the Urrasti sky, Urras is Hell. To Keng, the woman from an Earth ruined by human greed and folly, Urras is Heaven. Both characters are right, to a point. The utopian element of this world is uncertain, just as the perfection of the Anarresti utopia is marred by its hardships, and by its increasing tendency towards conformity and rule by computer. The two worlds are forms of utopian imagery; but they are both ambiguous.

But from the combination of both cultures, represented by Shevek's

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100. Ursula K. LeGuin, The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 303.

journey from Anarres to Urras, comes the culmination of Shevek's work in theoretical physics. He finishes his life-long research, and offers to the universe at large a Theory of Simultaneity, which makes possible the union of the nine Known Worlds, drawing together the pieces to form the nucleus of the whole, unified system of humanity which the Ekumen seeks, centuries later, to complete. It is significant that Shevek refuses to give his work to any one world, whether it is the Urras he has come to hate, or the imperfect Anarres that is his home. He goes, instead, to the Terran Embassy, where he knows that his work will be given not only to Earth, but also to Hain, and through these two worlds to all the known worlds. He tells Keng,

> "Do you not understand that I want to give this to you -- and to Hain and the other worlds -- and to the countries of Urras? But to you all! So that one of you cannot use it, as A-Io wants to do, to get power over the others, to get richer or to win more wars. So that you cannot use the truth for your private profit, but only for the common good." 101

So, the gift is made; and through Shevek's research comes the invention of the ansible, which brings the Known Worlds together as The League of All Worlds, within fifty years.

Shevek's General Field theory is the result of his communion with other people, away from his own world. By indirection, it is

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101. LeGuin, The Dispossessed, p. 301.

another example of what the Ekumen has called, in The Left Hand of Darkness, "the evolutionary tendency inherent in Being; one manifestation of which is exploration." [102] Shevek is an explorer in the theoretical world of spatial and temporal physics, and in the real world of inter-planetary travel and social experiment. Through his work, and through the example of his life in The Dispossessed, LeGuin has again expressed elements of the myth of evolution.

In a footnote to his essay on the structure of LeGuin's sf work, Refail Nudelman states:

> In this openness and general inconclusiveness of LeGuin's method of using mythic elements one might see the essential structural difference between myth as such and LeGuin's SF. Its mythopoeic aspect does not exhaust all aspects of its content; a mythological interpretation of its structure can therefore render only a partial account of it. 103.

That myth is not the whole substance of a story is clear enough. The story of Estraven in The Left Hand of Darkness, for example, is deliberately compared to the Gethenian myths of Estraven the Traitor, and other legends within the novel, by LeGuin. None of the myths forms an exact correlation. Yet each myth sheds light on the "true" story of the novel, and the archetypes that these created myths reflect shed light on the creative whole, giving an added human dimension to the novel that only myth can bring.

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102. LeGuin, Left Hand..., p. 200.

103. Refail Nudelman, "An Approach to the Structure of LeGuin's SF," Alan G. Meyefs, trans., in Science-Fiction Studies, II, 7 (Nov., 1975), p. 220.

Nothing is simple. The imagery of traditional myth, and the thematic patterns of the modern, minor myths, both offer means of symbolic expression that carry a greater weight of meaning than simple expression can bear. As Estraven points out to his travel companion, the human man, Genly Ai, the sunlight of basic reality is not enough; we must have the shadow of myth in order to know how to move.

VI

This study is by no means a complete analysis of science fiction since Mary Shelley's Frankenstein; nor is it meant to be. What it is, is a brief look at the growth of a genre, from its first appearance at the beginning of the 19th century to the present day, from the viewpoint of the mythologies it contains. Reworking of the classic myths has been found in several of the works, and in some the creation of "mythologies" to support the anthropological observations of invented cultures. All of the works examined have made use, to some extent, of the modern myths which Bernard Bergonzi has called the "minor" ones, the themes of alienation, science and progress, and evolution being the myths of the modern age to recur most regularly. In his book, The Stubborn Structure, Northrop Frye comments on the mythologies of serious and popular literatures:

> Literature, we said, is conscious mythology: it creates an autonomous world that gives us an imaginative perspective on the actual one. But there is another kind of mythology, one produced by society itself, the object of which is to persuade us to accept existing social values. 'Popular' literature, the kind that is read for relaxation and the quieting of the mind, expresses this social mythology. We all feel a general difference between serious and soothing literature, though I know of no critical rule for distinguishing them, nor is there likely to be one. The same work may belong to both mythologies at once, and in fact the separation between them is largely a perspective of our own revolutionary age. 104.

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104. Northrop Frye, The Stubborn Structure, Essays on Criticism and Society (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1970), p. 298.

In the course of this study, both mythologies have been noted. A number of authors have been popularizers of the social myths of progress and science, and many have supported the myths of sexual role-playing and social order by default, simply because they offered no challenge to these myths. Others have examined the myths of our society with a detached perspective, and, embracing the mythology of "serious" literature, have given us a fresh imaginative perspective on those myths. Most of the popularizers have been among the followers of Verne, and the adventurers, like Burroughs. The writer who set the trend for the serious mythology, and for the blending of the serious and popular viewpoints, was H.G. Wells, and his followers have been people like Stapledon, and in some ways, LeGuin.

"Reality," says Frye, "is primarily what we create, not what we contemplate." [105] What science fiction writers attempt to create is a world in which people have the intelligence to recognize and try to cope with the problems of their lifestyles. Wells saw the potential dehumanizing effect of the class-structure on the human race, and showed his readers the degenerate, no longer human Morlocks and Eloi. LeGuin sees the problems that our myths of sexuality create in the contemporary world, and offers two alternative perspectives in her novels The Left Hand of Darkness and The Dispossessed. Other authors, whose works have not been especially examined here, offer other viewpoints. Harlan Ellison examines the role of pain and suffering in human growth in his story, "Paingod," and the meaning of love in "A Boy and

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105. Frye, Stubborn Structure, p. 51.

His Dog." Roger Zelazny examines mythologies and religions in his absurdist science fiction novels, Lord of Light and Creatures of Light and Darkness. Judith Merril looks at the myth of motherhood in "That Only a Mother," while Samuel Delaney offers a new treatment of the classic Arthurian quest in Nova.

Ursula LeGuin has said:

> If science fiction has a major gift to offer literature, I think it is just this: the capacity to face an open universe. Physically open, psychically open. No doors shut.
>
> What science, from physics and astronomy to history and psychology, has given us, is the open universe: a cosmos that is not a simple, fixed hierarchy, but an immensely complex process in time. All the doors stand open, from the prehuman past through the incredible present to the terrible and hopeful future. All connections are possible. All alternatives are thinkable. It is not a comfortable, reassuring place. It's a very large house, a very drafty house. But it's the house we live in.
>
> And science fiction seems to be the modern literary art which is capable of living in that huge and drafty house, and feeling at home there, and playing games up and down the stairs, from basement to attic. 106.

Born with the Industrial Revolution, and the growth of the physical sciences, and the rise of the social sciences, science fiction is truly a modern art form. Its myths and preoccupations are those of this modern age in which we live. In it, alternate viewpoints and potential solutions can be developed, current trends evaluated, basic facts studied

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106. Ursula K. LeGuin, "Forum: Escape Routes," in Galaxy, XXXV, 12 (Dec., 1974), p. 44.

in the laboratory of the printed word. Extrapolation is as important a part of science fiction as is its sense of wonder, and its faith in humanity. The past of our race lies behind us, lit by the lights of history, art, and archeology. The present is around us, and is illuminated by our technological media, and the thought of our great scholars and artists. The future stretches ahead of us, dim and mysterious, not yet created from the darkness of the unknown void. Science fiction offers us a lamp to glimpse what little we may in that future, using the arts and sciences of past and present to fuel its speculative flame. There are as many versions of what lies ahead as there are writers, in modern literature. But on one thing the science fiction writers at least are generally agreed: there is something ahead. The human race has a future, however dark, however hidden it may be. Let us praise, then, darkness, and creation unfinished.

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